Ballooning deficit prompts cut in RP credit rating

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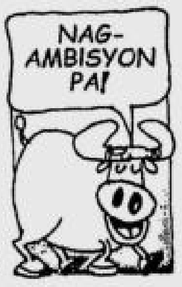
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Erap wants same treatment as Atong's

By Volt Contreras



CALL it the Atong Ang doctrine.

The defense lawyers of deposed President Joseph Estrada said yesterday the US court

ERAP/A11

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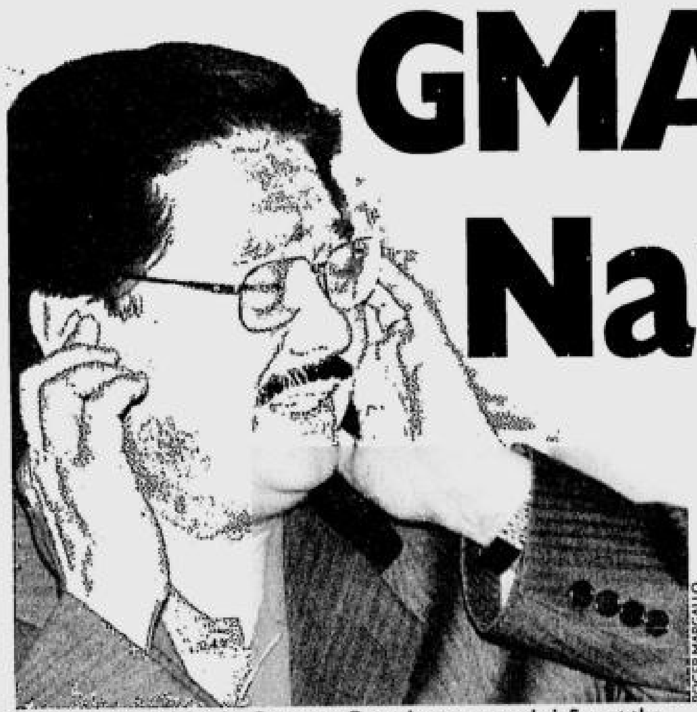
GMA expected to ask Nani to go on leave


ROGER MARGALLO

VISIBLY stressed, Justice Secretary Perez hosts a press briefing at the Naia to deny Rep. Mark Jimenez's charges. "He said that I asked money from him. For what?! He must be dreaming," Perez exclaimed.

Dossier on Perez coursed thru SC justice

By Amando Doronila and Norman Bordadora

TIRED and sometimes teary-eyed, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez yesterday angrily denied that he had extorted money from Rep. Mark Jimenez. But the congressman's privilege speech—which claimed that Perez extorted $2 million from Jimenez early last year—appears to have jumped the gun on a carefully laid Palace plan.

The President told the INQUIRER on Saturday that Perez had already asked for a leave of absence from the Cabinet, and that she was to announce the leave on Nov. 30, during a major policy speech.

The decision for Perez to go on leave was planned days ahead of Jimenez's privilege speech and was meant to defuse accusations by Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama that Perez had accepted a $2-million bribe.

A source close to the Palace said the President had decided to ask Perez to go on leave after she received a dossier detailing

GMA/A17

Jimenez accuses Perez of extorting $2M, demands his head

By Juliet L. Javellana

THE BUSINESSMAN whom Joseph Estrada once referred to as a "corporate genius" turned anti-corruption crusader yesterday, in an emotional one-hour privilege speech that drew the applause of his fellow congressmen.

Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez "confirmed" that Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez extorted $2 million from him early last year—for what exactly, he did not make clear.

Saying Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama, his friend who broke the news last month, had spoken "truly and well" about the extortion, Jimenez said the crime happened in his home in the third week of January last year and was consummated on Feb. 23, 2001, when he wired the money to an account in Coutts Bank of Hong Kong. Jimenez said the account details were given to him by businessman Ernest Escaler, who he claimed

JIMENEZ/A18

REP. Mark Jimenez delivers his accusations against Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

"I ACCUSE, I accuse, I accuse Secretary Hernando Perez of destroying my family..."

"BUT secondary to that, I'm confirming that he is an extortionist..."

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Ballooning deficit prompts cut in RP credit rating

By Clarissa S. Batino, Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño

FITCH Ratings cut yesterday its sovereign outlook for the Philippines to negative from stable, citing the country's falling tax take that had undermined the government's credibility and fanned concerns about its rising debt.

"A stable outlook appears increasingly inappropriate in the context of the seemingly relentless decline in public revenue, particularly when judged against the background of a modest economic recovery and a benign macroeconomic environment," the London-based ratings agency said in a statement.

"Public revenue has fallen from a peak of 19.1 percent of gross domestic product in 1997 to a projected 13.9 percent in 2002, reflecting institutional shortcomings at the Bureau of Internal Revenue," Fitch said.

Fitch senior director for Asian sovereign ratings Brian Coulton said: "It's just the very disappointing news on the fiscal side and the failure of revenue to show any signs of sustained recovery. Loss of fiscal credibility is a major concern."

Behind Fitch's gloom was the government's admission on Thursday that its budget deficit blew past its full-year goal of 4.5 percent of GDP—the monetary value of all the goods and services pro-

BALLOONING/A17

British Boy Scouts unfazed by Abu warning

By TJ Burgonio

NOTWITHSTANDING an Abu Sayyaf warning that the Philippines has become a target of international terrorists, some 700 young scouts from Britain are coming over in early January for a five-day visit to meet with their local counterparts, according to the Philippine National Police.

An Abu Sayyaf leader yesterday warned that President Macapagal-Arroyo's support for the US-led global war on terror and the signing of the RP-US Mutual Logistics Support Agreement had made the Philippines a prime target for terrorist attacks.

Even so, PNP Director for Police Community Relations Ricardo de Leon said the British scouts, who are all high school students, were scheduled to arrive in Manila on Jan. 8 after attending the World Jamboree in Thailand.

"We're very happy that they've chosen to come to the Philippines after the jamboree. Apparently, they want to go around and see our tourist spots, including the beaches," De Leon told reporters.

The PNP is drawing up measures to ensure the safety of the British scouts, De Leon said. Intelligence agents earlier uncovered a plot by the Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, to detonate truck bombs in Metro Manila.

The Boy Scouts of the Philippines, PNP and Department of Tourism are lining up a series of "wholesome activities" for the English scouts to foster "close interac-

BRITISH/A11

PROTESTING MLSA

Student activists bewail what they describe as the cloak-and-dagger manner in which the MLSA was negotiated and signed during a rally in front of Camp Aguinaldo on Monday. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

NPA rebs ambush, kill 4 soldiers in Mindoro

By Madonna Virola and Delfin Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro—Communist guerrillas ambushed and killed four Army soldiers and wounded nine others in an ambush, and later torched a mobile phone relay station in Puerto Galera, one of the country's best-known scuba diving spots, on Sunday afternoon.

One of those wounded in the ambush was Col. Jovito Palparan, commander of the 204th Infantry Brigade, who earlier declared that the military had cleared Oriental Mindoro of "90 percent" of the rebels.

Senior Supt. Voltaire M. Calzado, provincial police chief, said the New People's Army rebels set fire to a relay station of Globe Telephone, the country's second largest telephone operator, as they fled pursuing soldiers.

Calzado said the twin attacks occurred in mountainous areas of Puerto Galera, about 8 km from the tourist center.

The NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has stepped up its attacks after the United States and European Union declared the two organizations as terrorist groups.

NPA/A17

DepEd fears exodus of good teachers

By Donna S. Cueto

IF they're leaving, they must be the best.

Reports of "excellent" teachers going abroad, tempted by offers of high-paying jobs, have reached the Department of Education.

On top of admitting that the department could do nothing to stop the exodus, Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus has also lamented that "the most vulnerable to this kind of piracy would obviously be the most experienced teachers in the best public and private schools."

And he foresees "continued pressure" on the teachers to accept the offers.

The DepEd is not hiding the fact that it is worried and can only hope new teachers would soon come in to fill vacated posts.

De Jesus could not give an exact count of the departures, but education officials are looking at a number big enough to compound the perennial problem of lack of teachers in the public school system.

"The reports are of attractive offers being made to Filipino teachers in private and public schools," De Jesus said. "I don't know how many have signed contracts, and how many have actually left the service."

He said the department was in no position to "motivate the best ones" to stay. "We cannot fight the opportunities if they present themselves."

But he said there was a large core of "potential teachers" who could replace those who are moving out.

What the department could do, to keep the potential replacements "in the pipeline," De Jesus said, was to sustain specialization-training and skills-upgrading efforts.

DepEd is getting some help in this

DEPED/A17

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/11/26/02

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Gov't junks Meralco takeover bid

Proposal was misunderstood–Perez

By Rocky Nazareno and Elena Torrijos

THE GOVERNMENT proposal to take over the management of the beleaguered Manila Electric Co. "has been thrown in the garbage," according to Energy Secretary Vince Perez.

Perez said the proposal made to the Lopez group by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho was a sincere and informal effort that was "misunderstood and misinterpreted."

The Lopezes, who own only one-fifth of Meralco but exercise full management control, have rejected the Camacho solution, calling it a "takeover."

Various politicians have assailed the government for even daring to propose it.

Perez, who heads a working group formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to review the financial standing of Meralco arising from the recent Supreme Court decision directing the utility to refund as much as P28 billion to its customers, told Senate reporters the committee's focus was "to ensure the financial viability of Meralco."

"The government will do everything it can to work with the other Meralco stakeholders to maintain the viability of the company. The government is keenly aware of the importance of Meralco and the need to work for its preservation," said Perez who was at the Senate for the budget hearing of the energy department.

He said he had already started talks with the Lopezes, the independent power producers, Pilipinas Shell and other stakeholders in Meralco "so that we can comply with the Supreme Court ruling while ensuring the viability" of the power utility.

Hands-off policy

Creditor banks yesterday indicated they would maintain a hands-off policy on the issue of whether the Lopezes should continue to have management control, or the government or another party should take over the power distributor.

But the banks stressed that the government must ensure that Meralco remain viable in the face of the Supreme Court ruling.

"This (management control issue) will have to be sorted out among themselves," Bank of the Philippine Islands president Xavier Loinaz said in an interview yesterday.

"People (creditors) are sitting on the fence, watching and waiting," he said.

Loinaz said he was not worried about his bank's P3.5 billion exposure in Meralco as the bank could roll over the short-term credit.

He also pointed out that Meralco had P70 billion in capital, a track record of earnings and a very strategic role in the country's development.

Meralco has P31 billion in total debt of which, according to a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas official, multilateral financial institutions, foreign banks and local banks each account for roughly one-third of the total debt.

The commercial banks with the biggest exposures are Citibank N.A., the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines, BPI, Equitable PCI Bank and Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

The government, the biggest shareholder of Meralco, owns a little over 25 percent of the utility. The Lopez family owns only 17 percent.

The government, in a solution first broached by Camacho, has proposed to take up more seats in the Meralco board for majority control as a way of improving the company's credit standing.

Perez said the Camacho proposal was "only one of the many options open to government." It did not mean that it would be the one that would be finally adopted, he said.

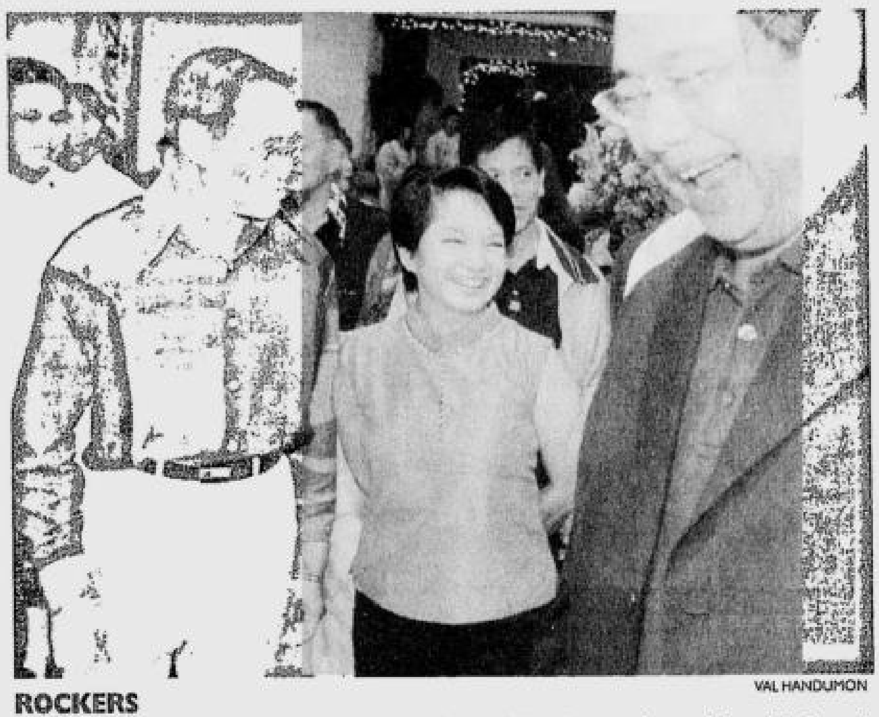
Starting point

He explained that the management control option was only the "initial starting point" of talks between Camacho and ABS-CBN chief executive officer Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III.

He said Camacho had only used the arrangement that the government had hammered out with business magnate Lucio Tan with regard to the Philippine National Bank as a template.

In an interview last week, BAP executive director Leonilo Coronel estimated that if Meralco were to default on its debts, it would push up the commercial banking sector's non-performing loan ratio by one percentage point.

Based on the latest data, P20 billion, the rough equivalent of Meralco debt held by both foreign and domestic banks, would represent 1.26 percent of the P1.581 trillion total loan portfolio of commercial banks as of the third quarter.



VAL HANDUMON

ROCKERS

President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo share a joke with Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Benjamin Defensor (left) during the rock and roll concert given by PMA Class '69 at Camp Aguinaldo last night. Defensor and other generals of the class performed rock and roll numbers.

Despite its ills, Gloria bats for more 'strong republics'

By Carlito Pablo

DESPITE the perception that her administration is foundering on the home front due to corruption and other ills, President Macapagal-Arroyo called yesterday for other countries to duplicate her model of a "strong republic."

Ms Macapagal made the suggestion in a speech at Malacañang before delegates to the Asia Pacific and Middle East regional conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies *(See related story on page A4)*.

The President called for the establishment of a "chain of strong republics" across the Pacific, Asia and the Middle East to overcome poverty, transnational crime and terrorism.

She recalled that in her State of the Nation address in July, she spoke of the need for a "strong Philippine republic to carry out vital reforms."

"Now I would like to call through you for a chain of strong republics across the region, traversing the Pacific, Asia and the Middle East," she told the delegates.

The President said this was needed "to ensure our collective security against terror and transnational crime and build societies that would help one another defeat poverty."

President Macapagal described the effort as "my call on the other side of our equally great effort to build institutions of human dignity and institutions like yours that make for a just, humane, peaceful society."

"For institutions like yours are indispensable institutions of good governance and a strong republic," the President said.

The President said her government shares the three concerns of the Red Cross and Red Crescent conference, which are health, population movement and disaster.

On the health front, Ms Macapagal said the government has a program that has cut in half the price of medicines often purchased by the poor.

She said the government has also provided health insurance for majority of the poor.

The President said her administration is likewise moving to disperse urban development and decongest Metro Manila.

"For example, affordable and dependable mass transport for the surrounding provinces of Metro Manila will make it possible to choose to establish a hometown family life in the countryside where the cost of living is less while still working in the city," she said.

The President also said in her speech that terrorist incidents are "becoming the most serious disasters."

"And I thank (you for your) work in soothing the suffering of the victims of terrorism even as I ask you to elevate other issues related to conflict and terrorism to a higher place in the agenda of your action and advocacy plan," Ms Macapagal said.

She cited as one issue the campaign against the employment of children and minors in combat.

Supreme Court spares 7 robbers from death

By Michael Lim Ubac

IN A SURPRISE ruling, the Supreme Court spared from the death penalty seven robbers who, in 1999, killed five people during a shooting spree that started in a pub in Caloocan City and ended in a convenience store in Quezon City.

Dated Nov. 13, the unanimous ruling commuted to *reclusion temporal* the death sentences that the Caloocan Regional Trial Court had imposed on Dominador Recepcion, Audie Dona, Alfredo Baracas, Eduardo Palacpac, Bernardo Ranara, Joemari de los Reyes and Robert Alfonso.

Noting that the prosecution failed to establish that murder had been committed, the SC said, the men should be held liable only for homicide "for the death of each of the victims."

The decision written by Associate Justice Jose C. Vitug gave each of the seven men five prison terms, with every term consisting of nine years and one day minimum, to 16 years and one day maximum.

They were also ordered to pay moral damages of P50,000 for each victim, reduced from the P100,000 prescribed by the Caloocan City Regional Trial Court.

The SC ruled that the lower court erred in convicting a fireman, Felipe de la Cruz, as accessory, and acquitted him for lack of evidence.

Court records showed that the seven men and an eighth companion, Diosdado Recepcion, was inside the Sabungan FastFood and Videoke pub on Samson Road in Caloocan City early morning of July 28, 1999. Without apparent provocation, one of them—later identified as Baracas—suddenly shot a customer.

Diosdado followed suit, shooting at pointblank range another customer, Rodolfo Ortega who, witnesses said, had been "on his knees" begging for his life.

The group then went berserk and fired several more shots.

When the rampage stopped, the victims Benjamin Valdez, Augusto Billodo, Renato Cleofas, Rodolfo Ortega and Ruperto San Juan lay lifeless on the floor.

Outside the pub, the gunmen stopped a jeepney, ordered all the passengers out, and told driver Ruben Labjata to drive to Monumento, then to Edsa, and finally to Quezon City.

Reaching a 7-11 convenience store in Tandang Sora, some of the men alighted from the jeepney and went inside. Police reports showed they ransacked the store and then peppered it with bullets. The robbery is the subject of another court proceeding.

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GMA orders probe of Quezon bus mishap

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered a probe into the bus accident in Quezon province that killed 33 people and injured six others.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said on radio yesterday that Ms Macapagal directed the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to "bring everyone responsible to justice."

The bus bound for Sorsogon plunged into a ravine along Quirino highway in Barangay San Vicente, Tagkawayan town just after midnight on Sunday. Initial investigation pointed to failed brakes. Among the dead was the bus driver.

No authority?

A public hearing has been set on Friday.

LTFRB chief Dante Lantin said Falcon Bus Liner, owned and operated by the Villamonte family of Camarines Norte, was not authorized to ply the Manila-Bicol route. The ill-fated bus had come from a Pasay terminal.

But the Villamontes' legal counsel Bonifacio Barandon said yesterday in an interview that the bus had an approved LTFRB "special permit or provisional authority."

In any case, Tagkawayan police chief Supt. Chris Daquigan said the ill-fated bus was not supposed to travel on Quirino Highway. "It seems the driver decided to take a shortcut," Daquigan said.

According to an Agence France Press report, the bus firm has been ordered to pay the families of the dead P50,000 each.

Engineer Efren Villamonte, through Barandon, assured the survivors and the casualties' relatives that he was not dodging responsibility.

Barandon said Villamonte had immediately sent a representative to Tagkawayan.

Unidentified

Daquigan confirmed that one Bernard Bregera, who identified himself as Villamonte's brother-in-law, arrived Sunday morning and met with the victims' families.

"But he could not promise anything concrete," the police chief said.

Three bodies remained unidentified, Daquigan said. These would be brought to a funeral parlor in Daet, where relatives could claim them. Meanwhile, he added, victims' families were having a hard time getting help from the bus firm.

Tagkawayan Mayor Vicente Salumbides III told the INQUIRER that Bregera had sought assistance from his office.

"We will shoulder everything," the mayor said, "if the bus owner can't."

Sen. Noli de Castro called for a Senate probe of the accident.

In a statement, De Castro said he was "appalled" by the fact that people died "just because . . . the operators (did not keep) the bus roadworthy." *Luis Abano and Delfin T. Mallari of PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, Rocky Nazareno, and a report from AFP*

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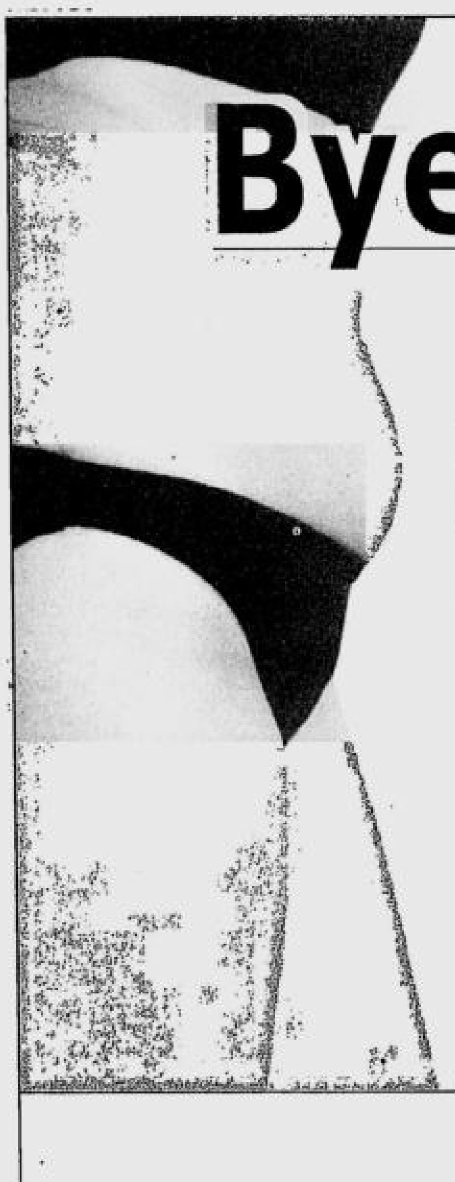

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US to RP: Amend 'launder' law

THE UNITED States has asked the Philippines to take additional steps to crack down on terrorist financing by amending its "deficient" anti-money laundering law.

US Treasury Deputy Secretary Kenneth Dam, in a letter to Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho obtained by the press on Monday, said his government was pleased with Manila's campaign against terrorism but should do more to curb the flow of laundered money.

"I believe the Philippine government should take additional steps to expand its authority to identify and freeze the assets of terrorists," Dam said.

"Specifically, it is important that the Philippines enact pending legislation criminalizing terrorism and terrorist financing and that it improves its ability to freeze the assets of terrorists without delay," he said.

The Philippines passed last year an anti-money laundering law under pressure from the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF). But the FATF said later the law was insufficient and asked the government to amend certain provisions.

Manila remains in the FATF's list of countries identified as havens for money laundering, but monetary officials said amendments to the law could be in place by early next year.

Dam said his government was ready to assist Manila in efforts "to combat terrorist financing," as he offered to send a team of experts to help local officials in strengthening the law.

"I propose sending . . . a legal team to conduct this exercise in early December. Please let us know if this proposal is agreeable," Dam said.

The Philippines was among the first countries to welcome the US-led global war on terrorism.

Early this year, hundreds of US Special Forces troops were deployed to the southern Philippines to help the Army against the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. *AFP*

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is introduced to her Royal Highness Princess Margariet, chairperson of the Standing Commission of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and Don Manuel Suarez del Toro, president of the federation, by Mario Nery of the Philippine National Red Cross, at Malacañang Palace.

Red Cross, Crescent urge Asian gov'ts to help 6M refugees

THE RED Cross and Red Crescent Societies meeting in the Philippines has urged Asian governments to ratify existing migrant and refugee conventions to improve conditions for six million displaced people in the region.

Asia "hosts the largest number of refugees in the world—approximately six million—but it also has the fewest ratifications of the major human rights conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention," said the emergency assistance groups in a statement Monday.

Ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the UN General Assembly 12 years ago, would send a clear message about Asian governments' commitment to helping refugees, the statement said.

The convention needs 20 signatures before it could enter into force, but has been ratified by only 19 countries.

Access to basic rights for millions of migrants—subject to social exclusion as well as racism and discrimination—could be improved if more governments ratified the existing conventions.

"We need to confront attitudes that discriminate against migrants and refugees. People are struggling to have even the basic right of access to health care. Population movement has left a trail of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion in its wake," said Red Cross secretary general Didier Cherpitel. *AFP*

Rock, don't blast, the New Year in, revelers urged

By Armand N. Nocum

DON'T light those "super lolo" firecrackers. Instead dust off those dancing shoes to welcome the New Year at street parties.

This was the suggestion made by health, local government and police officials yesterday as they launched "Oplan: Iwas Paputok, Rock the Streers!" this year's project to bring down the pyrotechnics casualty rate during the Christmas and New Year season.

In a press briefing, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit also suggested local government officials designate certain areas for the public display of safe pyrotechnics.

"To welcome the New Year with a bloodless bang, we are encouraging our local officials to stage fireworks displays at the community level," he said.

Dayrit noted that Davao and Cotabato have passed laws designating firecracker zones, as well as regulating the sale of pyrotechnics.

For its part, Marikina City plans to have a public fireworks display on Dec. 30 at the Riverbanks Mall starting at 10 p.m., along with the holding of a free concert and street dancing.

"Let's all welcome the New Year without injuries. Instead, let us rock the streets," Dayrit said.

Police officials attending the briefing also vowed to seriously implement the laws banning the sale and use of dangerous firecrackers, including *watusi* or dancing firecracker, which could kill when ingested.

Firecrackers injured about 600 people last year, a number that was 50 percent lower than in previous years. Watusi killed four people, mostly minors.

E.A. Baculi; 75

EDMUNDO "Trifon" Arranz Baculi of Cagayan and Quezon City died Sunday after a lingering illness. He was 75.

He is survived by his wife Dr. Lilia Berbano Baculi, children Monique, Jane and Edmundo "Junel," their spouses and grandchildren.

His remains lie at the Funeraria Paz on Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Interment plans will be announced later.

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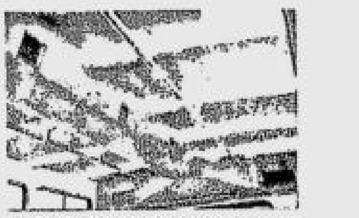

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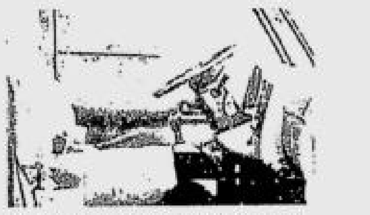

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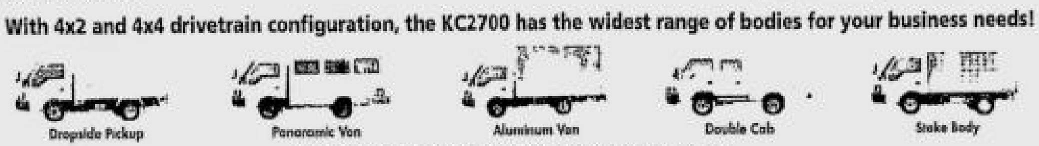

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Gascon named DepEd exec

GOVERNMENT peace panel negotiator and former student activist Jose Luis "Chito" Gascon is the newest undersecretary at the Department of Education, completing the team of new Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus.

Gascon, undersecretary for legal affairs, joins three other undersecretaries: Juan Miguel M. Luz, Ramon Bacani and Fe Hidalgo.

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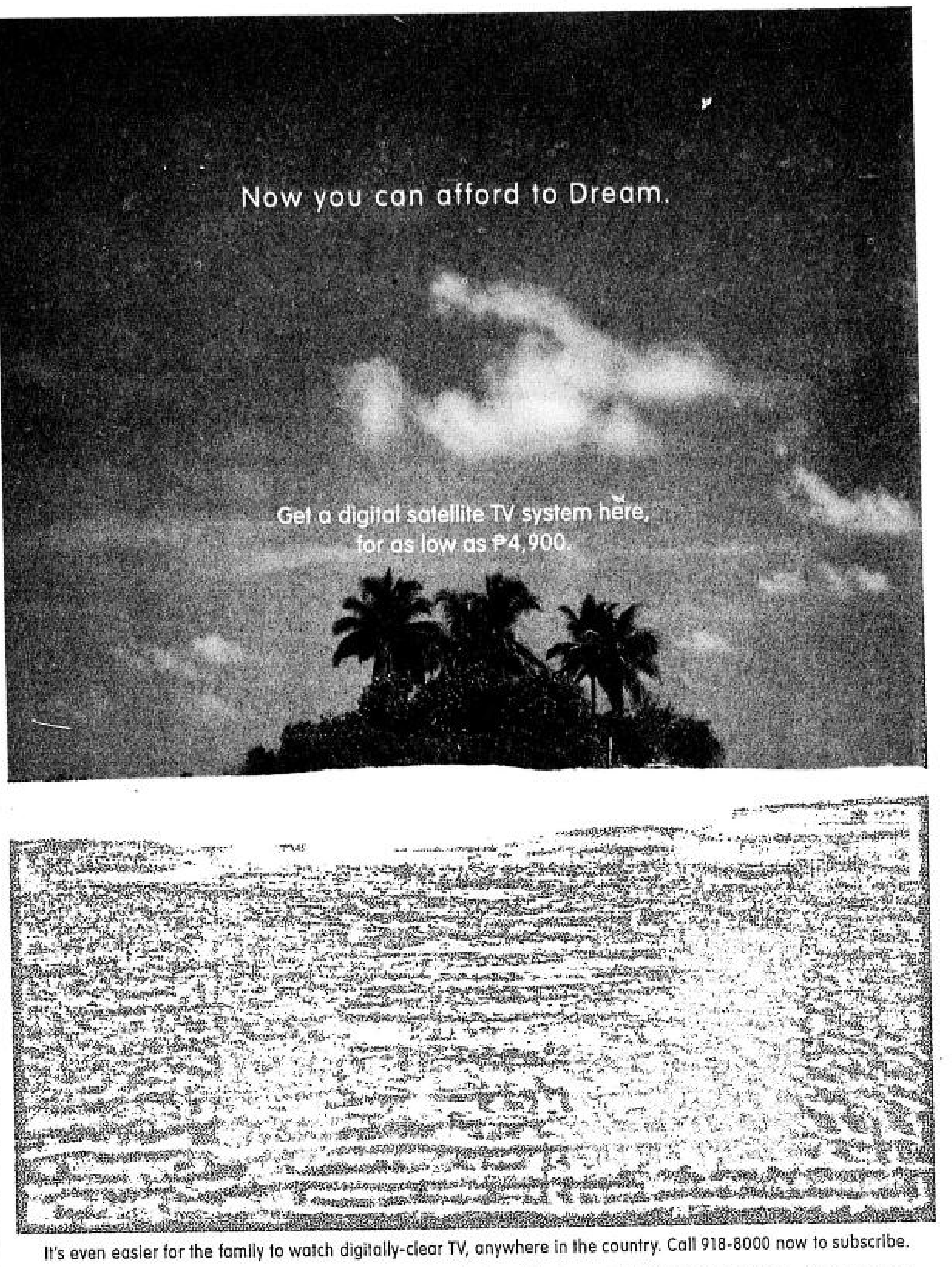
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Nicole: the answer to doctor's prayer

By Cathy Babao Guballa

NINE-YEAR-OLD Nicole Figueroa, who is suffering from acute myeloid leukemia and has been fighting for her life these past two months, has found the answer to her prayers.

Nicole is to be admitted this morning to the Asian Hospital in Alabang to begin the journey that will hopefully cure her of the deadly disease plaguing her frail body.

Ironically, Nicole's case is also an answered prayer for her benefactor.

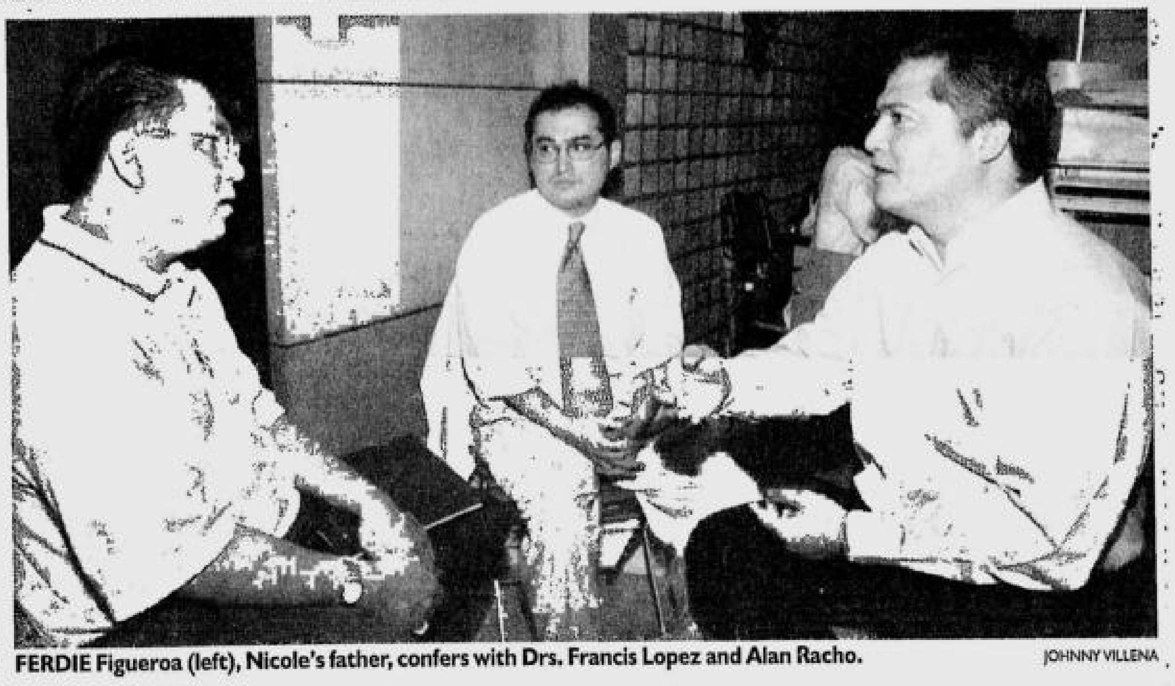
Last July, Dr. Francis Lopez came home for good from the United States. Lopez, a hematologist-oncologist who specialized in bone marrow transplantation at Rhode Island's Brown University, has been praying for a month now for a challenging case to come his way.

"When my last patient was discharged, I asked the Lord to give me another challenging case. When I heard about Nicole's case, I knew she was it," he said.

An article published in the INQUIRER last September related how the Figueroas had been unable to find a hospital that would agree to perform the bone marrow transplant that would save young Nicole's life.

"They were asking for P3 million up front. Otherwise, they would not touch Nicole's case," explained Ferdie Figueroa, Nicole's father.

Still reeling from the death of his wife earlier this year, Ferdie was deep in mourning when Nicole was diagnosed with AML, a cancer of the white blood cells, last July. The girl had been acting like a surrogate mother to a younger brother since her mother's death.



FERDIE Figueroa (left), Nicole's father, confers with Drs. Francis Lopez and Alan Racho. JOHNNY VILLENA

The INQUIRER article as well as e-mail sent to many people all over the world raised almost a million pesos. But that was not enough to cover the cost of a bone marrow transplant.

In early November, Ferdie sought Dr. Lopez whom he and his family had heard about from other patients.

"I knew Ferdie's cousin from the Ateneo and when he told me about Nicole's case, I invited them over for a consultation," said Lopez.

After a series of meetings with Dr. Lopez and Dr. Alan Racho, a pediatric oncologist, the Figueroas decided to let them treat Nicole.

Lopez explains the course of treatment for Nicole whose older brother, Justin, will be her bone marrow donor.

"First, she will be undergoing intense chemotherapy for a week to knock out the remaining leukemic cells. After a week, we will harvest cells from Justin using an apheresis machine. The procedure takes approximately four hours. The harvested cells will be given to Nicole by transfusion," Lopez explained.

Barring any complications, those cells will attach and divide so that in two to three weeks' time, Nicole will have new, healthy cells in her blood.

NICOLE begins a course of treatment today at the Asian Hospital to cure her of AML leukemia, a cancer of the white blood cells. PDI PHOTO

More important for the family, Nicole's doctors have initiated measures to bring down the cost of hospitalization and the actual transplant, according to Ferdie.

"We were finalizing the details of her treatment already and yet there was no mention of money," he said.

Unlike another large private Metro Manila hospital, this time the Figueroas are not being made to feel like it was a "no money-no treatment" option. As it is, the original cost of the transplant has already been reduced by more than a million pesos.

"Dr. Lopez and his team are a godsend," said Ferdie.

Though their funds are still short by about half a million pesos, he said he was confident that "the Lord will provide."

Nicole begins her treatment today, with the actual transplant scheduled for Dec. 2.

"We still have to keep Nicole in the hospital for another month to prevent complications and to keep her from getting an infection," said Lopez.

It is a long and arduous six-week process but at least now the Figueroas can look forward to Christmas.

"God willing, we will have half the battle won by then," said Ferdie.

Those wishing to offer assistance can call Ferdie Figueroa at (0918) 905-1689, or his cousin Dr. Jay Alvarez-Sarmiento at (0917) 810-2508.

MLSA signatory given second star

SIX colonels and Navy captains got their first stars while three star-ranked officers, including the officer who signed the controversial Mutual Logistics Support Agreement with the United States, were given their second stars in the latest round of military promotions approved by Malacañang on Nov. 10 and announced yesterday.

Those who obtained their first stars were Colonels Eusebio Ramos from the Philippine Army, Claudio Estalilia and Pedro Inserto of the Air Force, and Navy Captains Anselmo Legaspi, Gilmer Batestil and Margarito Sanchez who were made commodores.

Those promoted to major generals and Rear Admiral were Commodore Ernesto de Leon, the deputy chief for plans and programs who signed the MLSA, Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, the former military spokesperson, and Brig. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, the AFP deputy chief of staff for capability, materiel and technology development.

Inserto, a member of the Philippine Military Academy class of 1974, is senior military assistant to Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes.

Four of the new generals and commodores are not from the PMA. Ramos and Legaspi are integrees while Estalilia is a 1970 graduate of the Flying School.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE

October 11, 2002

REVENUE REGULATIONS NO. 19-2002

SUBJECT : Amending Revenue Regulations No. 3-2002 and Further Amending Section 2.83 of Revenue Regulations No. 2-98 as Amended, Relative to Substituted Filing of Income Tax Return of Employees Receiving Purely Compensation Income from Only One Employer for One Taxable Year Whose Tax Due is Equal to Tax Withheld and Individual-Payees Whose Compensation Income is Subject to Final Withholding Tax.

TO : All internal Revenue Officers, Employees and Others Concerned.

SECTION 1. Scope. – Pursuant to the provisions of Section 244 in relation to Section 51 (A)(2)(b) of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, these Regulations are hereby promulgated to further amend pertinent provisions of Revenue Regulations No. 2-98, as amended by Revenue Regulations No. 3-2002.

SECTION 2. Amendment. – Section 2.83.1 of Revenue Regulations No. 2-98, as amended by Section 2 of Revenue Regulations No. 3-2002, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"Section 2.83.1. Certificate of Compensation Payment/Tax Withheld (BIR Form No. 2316). In general, every employer or other person who is required to deduct and withhold the tax on compensation including fringe benefits given to rank and file employees, shall furnish every employee from whose compensation taxes have been withheld the **Certificate of Compensation Payment/Tax Withheld** (BIR Form No. 2316), on or before January 31 of the succeeding calendar year, or if the employment is terminated before the close of such calendar year, on the day on which the last payment of compensation is made. Failure to furnish the same shall be a ground for the mandatory audit of payor's income tax liabilities (including withholding tax) upon verified complaint of the payee.

xxx xxx xxx

The certificate of Compensation Payment/Tax Withheld (BIR Form No. 2316) shall contain a certification to the effect that the employer's filing of BIR Form No. 1604-CF shall be considered as a substituted filing of the employee's income tax return to the extent that the amount of compensation and tax withheld appearing in BIR Form No. 1604-CF as filed with BIR is consistent with the corresponding amounts indicated in BIR Form No. 2316. It shall be signed by both the employee and employer attesting to the fact that the information stated therein has been verified and is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. However, the **withholding agents/employers are required to retain copies of the duly signed BIR Form No. 2316 for a period of three (3) years as required under the National Internal Revenue Code.**

The employee who is qualified for substituted filing of income tax return under these regulations, shall no longer be required to file income tax return (BIR Form No. 1700) since BIR Form No. 1604-CF shall be considered a substituted return filed by the employer. BIR Form No. 2316, duly certified by both employee and employer, shall serve the same purpose as if a BIR Form No. 1700 had been filed, such as proof of financial capacity for purposes of loan, credit card, or other applications, or for the purpose of availing tax credit in the employee's home country and for other purposes with various government agencies. This may also be used for purposes of securing travel tax exemption, when necessary.

However, information referring to the certification, appearing at the bottom of BIR Form No. 2316, shall not be signed by both the employer and the employee if the latter is not qualified for substituted filing. In which case, BIR Form No. 2316 furnished by the employer to the employee shall be attached to the employee's Income Tax Return (BIR Form No. 1700) to be filed on or before April 15 of the following year.

For the implementation of these Regulations, BIR Form No. 2316 herein referred to shall be BIR Form No. 2316 version October 2002 or any later version. Thus, the old version cannot be used for this purpose although may be used for those taxpayers still required to file BIR Form No. 1700."

Section 3. Repealing Clause. The provisions of existing regulations and issuances inconsistent with the provisions of these Regulations are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 4. Effectivity Clause. These Regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in any newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary of Finance

Recommending Approval

GUILLERMO L. PARAYNO, JR.
Commissioner of Internal Revenue

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE

October 14, 2002

REVENUE REGULATIONS NO. 20-2002

SUBJECT : Clarifying the Tax Treatment of Income Earned from Unregistered Activities by Enterprises Registered under the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992 and the Philippine Economic Zone Act of 1995

TO : All Internal Revenue Officers and Others Concerned

These Regulations are issued to clarify the internal revenue tax treatment of income earned from unregistered activities by enterprises that are registered with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, the Clark Development Authority, or the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, as the case may be.

SECTION1. TAX TREATMENT - Income derived by an enterprise registered with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), the Clark Development Authority (CDA), or the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) from its registered activity/ies shall be subject to such tax treatment as may be specified in its terms of registration (i.e., the 5% preferential tax rate, the income tax holiday, or the regular income tax rate, as the case may be). Nonetheless, whatever the tax treatment of said enterprises with respect to its registered activity/ies, income realized by such registered enterprises that is not related to its registered activity/ies shall be subject to the regular internal revenue taxes, such as the 20% final income tax on interest from Philippine Currency bank deposits and yield or any other monetary benefit from deposit substitutes, and from trust funds and similar arrangements, the 7.5% tax on foreign currency deposits and the 5%/10% capital gains tax or ½% stock transaction tax, as the case may be, on the sale of shares of stock:

Income payments made by a registered enterprise to an entity in the Customs Territory shall not be subject to the preferential tax rates or tax exemption enjoyed by the registered enterprise. Thus, dividends paid to the shareholders of a registered enterprise, interest payments to creditors of such registered enterprise (regardless of any tax provision for grossing up of taxes), and other such payments shall be subject to the appropriate rate of tax imposable on the recipient of such income.

SEC. 2. REPEALING CLAUSE – Section 6 (f) of Revenue Regulations No. 1-95 and the provisions of all other internal revenue issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVITY – Except for the second paragraph of Section 1 which is mere reiteration of the law already enforced, these regulations shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following publication in the Official Gazette or any newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary of Finance

Recommending Approval

GUILLERMO L. PARAYNO, JR.

Inquirer -- Nov 26 2002

PUBLIC ADVISORY

This is to inform the public that, through some intelligence networks, we have recovered a few vials of Meronem® (Meropenem) 1 gram powder for I.V. Injection purportedly part of our production Lot No. AX653. Subsequent tests and analyses by our Quality Assurance Testing Center in Caponago, Italy have shown these units were not legitimate.

As a matter of prudence, and after having reported the matter to the Bureau of Food and Drugs, we have decided to recall any and all vials of this product produced under the above indicated lot number. Although we believe that there is, if any, only insignificant quantity of this lot still out in the market, we request any party which may yet be in possession of Meronem® 1 gram bearing Lot No. AX653 to desist from further using or selling this particular lot and immediately return them to AstraZeneca or our exclusively authorized distributor, Zuellig Pharma Corporation, for appropriate replacement. In this regard, address and telephone numbers of AstraZeneca and Zuellig Pharma are shown hereunder.

Furthermore, the public is hereby advised to purchase Meronem® (Meropenem) **only** from drugstores, retail outlets, or wholesalers and other channels **supplied** by Zuellig Pharma Corporation. We also take this opportunity to assure the public that AstraZeneca is committed and will continue to do its best to protect the public's healthcare and interest.

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Gunmen kill 2 sailors, wound 1 in Palawan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Two Philippine Navy personnel were killed while another was wounded when unidentified gunmen opened fire at their boat at around 10 p.m. Saturday in Balabac, Palawan.

The Navy watercraft, the Kanluran II, was docked at the Balabac pier when the incident happened. Balabac is Palawan's southernmost island and is near Tawi-Tawi.

Western Command chief Rear Adm. Ruben Domingo identified the casualties as Fireman 1st Class Potenciano Masangkay and Seaman 1st Class Crisologo Marcorde. Petty Officer 3 Benito Peralta survived the incident after he dived under the boat. Masangcay and Maconde were members of Western Command's Task Force 41.

The Navy team was preparing to take the watercraft to Puerto Princesa City to deliver 50 sacks of ammonium nitrate confiscated by the Navy in a recent operation when they were attacked by 16 armed men on board two motorized bancas.

After strafing the boat, the gunmen took with them high-caliber firearms like a .45-cal. pistol, three M-16 Armalite rifles, an M-60 US machine gun and boxes of bullets.

A Navy ship stationed one kilometer away from the incident responded but the armed men were able to get away.

Elements of the Philippine Air Force, Marines and the Special Warfare Group of the Philippine Navy launched a search for the suspects.

Domingo theorized the suspects were getting even with the Navy for confiscating the ammonium nitrate, which was about to be delivered to Nasubuca Island in Balabac.

Authorities said they are investigating the owner of the boat, Hadji Ricky Sairon of Barangay Bancalaan, Balabac, for his involvement in the incident.

Five of Sairon's men were reportedly arrested but were able to escape from military custody.

The military suspects the ammonium nitrate was to be used in making bombs.

Naval forces commander Capt. Gilmer Batasil said the chemicals may have been intended to be made into explosives for illegal fishing. *Jofelle Tesorio and Geraldford P. Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

End to violence vs newsmen sought

ILOILO CITY—An international group of journalists has appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to act to stop the violence being inflicted against Filipino journalists.

In a Nov. 22 letter, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the world's largest organization of journalists, expressed deep concern over "the ongoing cycle of violence" against journalists in the country.

Citing a report of the National Union of Journalist of the Philippines (NUJP), IFJ president Christopher Warren said the incidents "paint an extremely disturbing picture of violence and intimidation towards journalists in the Philippines."

The IFJ, established in 1926, represents some 450,000 members in more than 100 countries.

The NUJP recorded six cases of harassment from Oct. 13 to Nov. 12 allegedly perpetrated by government security forces.

Four of the cases were in the Visayas, one in Southern Luzon and one involved a reporter covering Malacañang.

In an e-mailed statement, NUJP vice chair Inday Espina-Varona said the incidents indicated "growing boldness among security forces in targeting journalists and asked if the attacks were part of Malacañang's 'strong republic' policy."

She said the NUJP and the Armed Forces have agreed to hold a dialogue this week on the mounting cases of media harassment in the country.

Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau

Pimentel, Señeres are tops with studes

A SENATOR and the chairman of the National Labor Relations Commission were named among the country's "outstanding public servants" for the year 2002.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and NLRC Chair Roy Señeres are among the 11 public officials chosen by the National Student Consensus, an interschool student organization, to serve as "role models" for elementary and high school students throughout the country.

Pimentel was chosen by the students for his "unblemished and principled record as a politician, freedom fighter during the Marcos dictatorship, as a constitutionalist, relentless foe of graft and corruption and for his consistent independent stance as a member of the Senate."

Señeres was cited for his "significant contribution to the overseas deployment of Filipino workers, thus helping boost the Philippines' financial resources through foreign exchange remittances, as former ambassador to the Middle East, and for bringing about unprecedented harmonious labor-management relations and industrial peace in the country as NLRC commissioner."

Other student choices were Supreme Court Justices Leonardo Quisumbing and Romeo Callejo and Court of Appeals Justice Salvador Valdez Jr., for helping strengthen the rule of law and the justice system; Clark Development Corp. president Dr. Emmanuel Y. Angeles and Philippine Economic Zone Administrator Lilia B. Angeles, for effectively promoting economic growth and development; Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Lauro Baja Jr., for outstanding service in the field of foreign affairs; Assistant Solicitors General Carlos N. Ortega and Aurora P. Cortes for government legal affairs; and public works special projects director Philip F. Menez for infrastructure.

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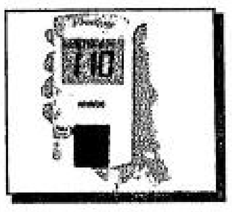

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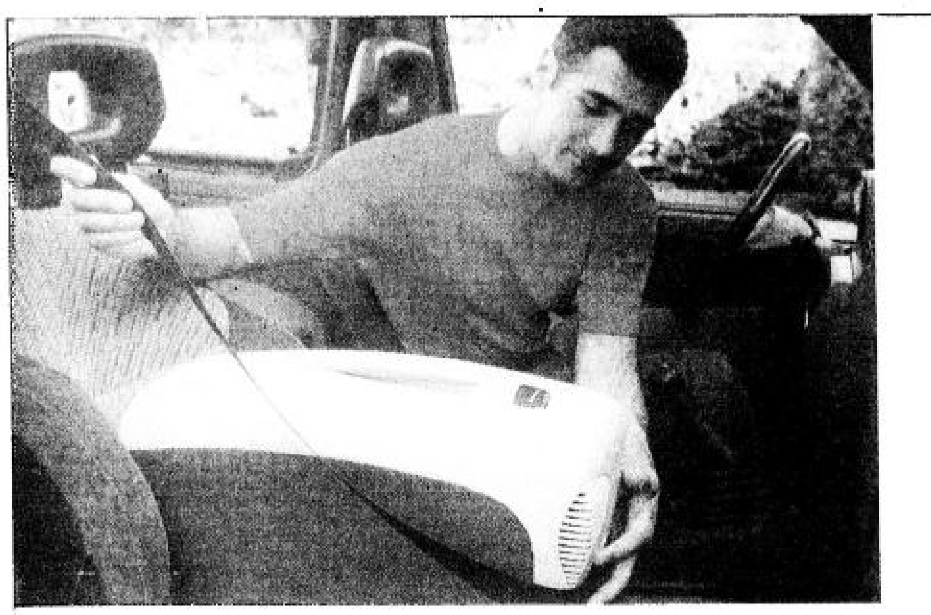

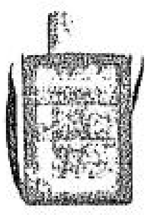

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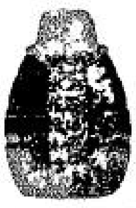

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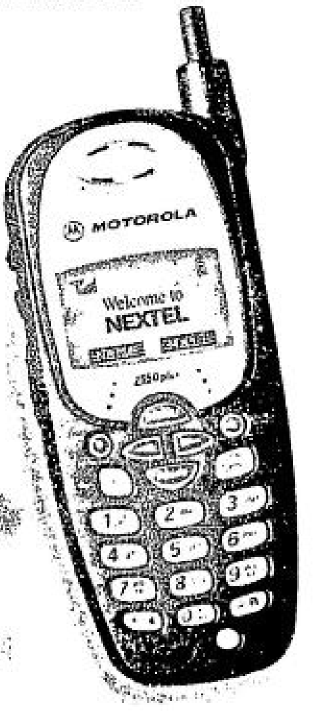

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Abuse of TROs

EDITORIAL

IT is well that the Supreme Court has ordered a nationwide survey of temporary restraining orders issued by judges of lower courts. A thorough examination of the cases where the TROs were issued should disclose whether the indiscriminate issuance of TROs is hampering the country's economic development.

A temporary restraining order is an emergency temporary remedy to restrain the defendant for a very brief period pending hearing on the application for a temporary injunction. In the 1971 case of BF Homes Inc. v. Reyes, the court said that the TRO "goes no further than to preserve the status quo, being the last, natural, peaceable, uncontested status which needed the pending controversy."

It is clear, from the name of the remedy itself—temporary restraining order—as well as from court decisions, that the order is merely temporary or provisional. But in some cases, the period of the TRO is so long that the remedy can no longer be called "temporary," or extension after extension is granted by the court so that the order begins to acquire some permanence. This has led the court to say, in the 1975 case of Simpas v. Adil, that "when a restraining order is allowed to last for more than one month, it can no longer be said to temporary; and its purpose, which is to maintain the status quo in the meantime that the petition is to be heard, is therefore abused."

It would appear, from the reports in the newspapers, that too many TROs are being issued in economic or business cases. In the past 19 months 26 TROs were issued by the lower courts. And these are only the major, reported cases. What about the relatively minor cases which have not been reported by the media?

The American Chamber of Commerce last April urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to resolve the concerns of foreign investors about the propensity of the courts to issue TROs. AmCham said TROs were being issued too frequently and haphazardly against foreign investors who had received the go signal for their businesses from Philippine officials.

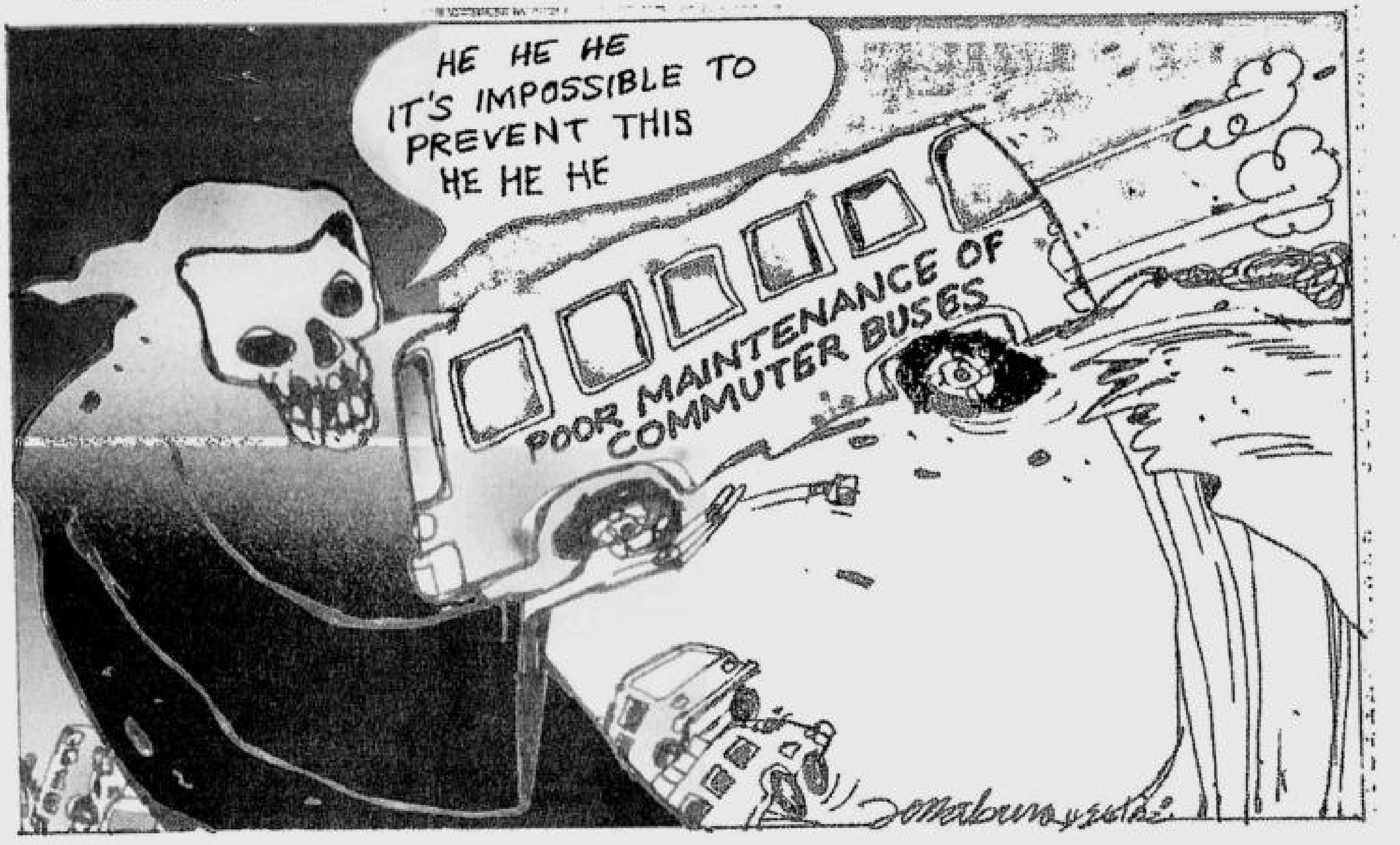
The US trade representative also expressed concern over the abuses of Philippine courts in issuing TROs which have delayed investment projects in the Philippines. He said judges rarely have any background in economics, business or a competitive economic system "which allows entrenched economic interests to manipulate the legal system and regulatory process to protect market positions."

One aspect that the Supreme Court should look into in its examination of the TROs is corruption. The public perception is that TROs are "for sale" in some, if not in many courts. US Ambassador Frank Ricciardone said last July that investors were shying away from the Philippines because of "corruption, not just regarding the courts but also officials outside" the judiciary. Days later the President grudgingly conceded that the problem of corruption was discouraging investments in the country.

It must be said, however, that the Supreme Court is intensifying its efforts to weed out corrupt judges and "hoodlums in robes." It has penalized 352 judges for committing various offenses from 1999 to early this year. The current inquiry ordered by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. should result in another purge of corrupt and extortive judges.

The Supreme Court can cleanse the judiciary if it will only have the political will to do it. A case decided last year shows that it can be done. On April 1, 2001, Judge Sancho Dames II of the Camarines Norte regional trial court was fined for issuing a TRO to prevent the execution of a labor arbiter's decision awarding P111,669.90 to Gregorio Nova, who had filed an illegal dismissal case against RA Broadcasting Corp. Investigate, prosecute and, if found guilty, penalize more judges who abuse the issuance of TROs and you will have a more discriminating procedure in the grant of this judicial remedy.

But the main objective of the current inquiry is to find out if the "improvident" issuance of TROs is having a serious impact on such things as government projects and the banking industry and the economy in general. In some cases, losing bidders obtain TROs against the winners. And in some other cases Philippine business groups obtain TROs against foreign business, scaring away foreign investors. The current inquiry should determine whether certain rules or criteria should be set up to guard against the indiscriminate issuance of TROs.



Meralco's problems a blessing in disguise?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

HISTORY is repeating itself in the present problems of Meralco. The Lopez family has been through it all, before its financial troubles with the Supreme Court order to refund P28 billion to its customers and the government plan to take over its operation. The family has had its ups and downs since the time of its patriarch, Don Eugenio Lopez Sr., but it always survives and recovers.

Paying out P28 billion in refunds will probably bankrupt Meralco. Furthermore, it will default on its loans to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, plus billions more from domestic banks. To bail it out, the government wants to take over its board of directors and its management and operations. But there is another solution.

In 1973, Meralco was in the same boat. It couldn't pay P101 million in peso and dollar loans which were past due. So it asked the government for help.

On Feb. 19, 1973, Don Eugenio Lopez wrote President Marcos, offering to sell the Lopez family holdings to a cooperative to be organized with the assistance of the government. He wrote:

"Nanding (Vice President Fernando Lopez) and I are also in accord with your concept of democratizing property in the Philippines and believe that ownership of industries vital to the economy should be dispersed as widely as possible.

"...For this reason, Nanding and I would like to offer the sale of our holdings to a cooperative composed of Meralco employees, customers and the general public that could be organized with the assistance of the government."

On March 20, 1973, Don Eugenio wrote a second letter to Marcos saying:

"In connection with my letter to you of Feb. 19...I am writing you again to ask for your help in solving the difficulties besetting the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) as well as its holding company, the Meralco Securities Corp. (MSC)

"You may recall that last January, Meralco offered to sell all its existing generating facilities to the Government/NPC. Soon thereafter, however, Meralco was advised by Secretary Melchor that the Government was not interested at the time in acquiring them. It was therefore felt that the proposal might be more acceptable if MSC were to divest itself of the ownership or control of Meralco. It was for this reason that, with my approval, Mr. Alfredo Montelibano, chair of the MSC board, proposed to you that all of the Meralco shares could be exchanged for government bonds."

On Sept. 17, 1973, Don Eugenio wrote a third letter to Marcos with a proposal for Benpres to "sell its holdings of MSC shares, on the basis of a self-liquidating investment, to a foundation created with your approval."

Thus was born the Meralco Foundation Inc. (MFI) organized by Marcos brother-in-law Benjamin Romualdez, which took over Meralco and assumed all the loans. The Lopez family still held shares through First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPHC) which was the new corporate name of MSC.

In 1984, Meralco was again in financial difficulties and stopped paying dividends. Consequently, MFI could not pay FPHC and the Development Bank of the Philippines, (DBP) and FPHC also could not pay the DBP. After the 1986 People Power Revolution, MFI still owed DBP P181.9 million and FPHC still owed the DBP P416 million, both loans collateralized with Meralco shares. The DBP transferred both loans to the Asset Privatization Trust (APT).

In August, 1987, the Presidential Commission on Good Government sequestered all the Meralco shares in the name of MFI, including the shares pledged to APT as alleged ill-gotten wealth of Romualdez.

Also in August, 1987, MFI/FPHC and APT, with the assistance of the Bank of the Philippine Islands and J.P. Morgan Trust Co., reached a compromise agreement in 1989. Acting on the petition of the APT, the PCGG lifted the sequestration of 19.9 million Meralco shares of MFI.

Under the compromise agreement, all the Meralco shares of MFI were transferred to the government. The Lopez family holdings through the FPHC remained intact.

Now Meralco and the Lopezes are again in financial trouble and somebody in the Macapagal administration again wants to do a Kokoy Romualdez and take over the whole of Meralco. "Here we go again," the shocked Lopez family must have said.

Actually, if Don Eugenio's descendants would only follow the old man's original plans for Meralco, which was to democratize its ownership by selling shares to its customers, employees and the public, there wouldn't be much of a problem. Pay the P28-billion refund to the customers in the form of shares of stocks. Thus, there would be no cash out. It would only broaden the ownership of Meralco, which was what the old man wanted.

Getting P33 a month in refund for eight years wouldn't even be felt by the recipient and won't contribute anything to the economy. Deducting the amount from the monthly Meralco bills won't even be noticed. But making the customers part owners of Meralco, holdings shares of stocks that can go up in value and which they can sell for cash in the stock market, and paying annual dividends, may give them a feeling of pride and ownership. Especially if they will be invited to attend stockholders' meetings. What's more, they wouldn't mind paying—indeed they may be eager to pay and may even report neighbors stealing electricity because what they pay will go back to them in the form of dividends.

In reacquiring Meralco, Don Eugenio's children and grandchildren forgot his vision. Meralco's present problems should remind them of it. Maybe it is a blessing in disguise.

Family

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I HAVE a problem with the way we discuss the issue of family in this country. Part of it has to do with the way the Catholic Church tends to define the threats to it.

That was patent last week in the statements of Jaime Cardinal Sin and Bishop Socrates Villegas at the opening rites of the Fourth World Meeting of Families, which will be held next January. The family, Sin said, "is always under attack in this country," for which the Filipino should ask God for help. "We will entrust to God every family member, from the innocent babies to the frail elderly. We will commend the indissoluble bond and love between spouses."

Now, except for abortion, it's hard to see what's so controversial with the other things he warns against. In particular, contraceptives and divorce. I still recall in the first respect, Sin's battle with Juan Flavier over condoms when Flavier was the health secretary. That was the time Sin called for people power in Luneta, and El Shaddai had to chip in to give the exercise some semblance of it. The faithful are sheep only in the metaphorical sense, not the literal one.

At the very least, it's arguable: Which is the real threat to the Filipino family, or indeed an affront to God, IUDs or a brood of 12 who can't be fed, much less sent to school? At the very most it's primitive: I doubt many Catholic Filipinos, even those with scrupulous consciences, will agree with Sin's tacit premise that the object of sex is to procreate, the exquisite pleasure that comes from it being entirely incidental or even sinful. I can at least say with confidence that when most Catholics grit their teeth and try to bear it, they are not in the throes of guilt.

As to divorce, again it's arguable whether the threat to family, or affront to God, is a couple going their separate ways or making life a living hell for each other and the kids. Or indeed, whether the threat to family, or affront to God, is a couple splitting up or warming a cold bed with a mistress or a dance instructor.

But that is only a small part of my unhappiness with the way we discuss the issue of family. The bigger part is why we always frame the issue in terms of the threats *to* the family. I should think the equally vital, if not more important, point is the threats *of* the family. The family is not just an object of harm, it is also a source of it.

That should be patent in the story that appeared on the same day the news about the World Meeting of Families did. That story said a survey showed most Asia-Pacific executives "put family and loved ones above career, money, and even society." The critical element there is "society." It's good that Asia-Pacific executives think of their families first before career and money. It's bad that they think of their families first before their communities.

Our problem is not that we do not care about family, it is that we are obsessed with it. We do not have a sense of belonging to a larger community, or nation, with its vague obligations and responsibilities, we have a sense of belonging only to a family, or clan, or at most province, with its more concrete obligations and responsibilities. If our executives think that way, our farmers and workers most assuredly do as well. The problem is not that we are unwilling to defend the family, it is that the family is all we are willing to defend.

We saw an example of that only some months ago when Robert Jaworski bolted the so-called opposition (so-called because its members are opposed only to not being in power) to join the administration coalition, breaking the apparent deadlock in the Senate. The reason he did so was that he couldn't very well say no to his father-in-law, Ramon Revilla, who begged him do it. He did not cite his discovery of the wisdom of the ruling coalition's position, he did not cite his unhappiness over the opposition's stance, he did not cite his belief that the national interest was best served by his defection. He invoked family. And lo and behold, nobody took him to task for it. Everybody appreciated the bind he was in.

If Alfred McCoy is to be believed, this country's history is better explained not by the influence or impact of ideologies and movements on national developments but by the influence and impact of individual families in running government. The title of his book, "An Anarchy of Families," a collection of essays by various authors on the powerful families in this country, says it all. Its premise is that politics in this country is far less national politics than family politics. The history of this country is how particular families fought to gain control of government and how they used state power to defend and expand their interests.

You do not have to go far to see that everything in this country revolves around family. Our concepts of loyalty and betrayal rest on family. Our very notion of corruption rests on family. To this day, the Ilocanos cannot think of Marcos as corrupt. How could anybody be corrupt who did all those things for *them*?

It is good to love your family, but not to the point where it overrides everything else. Erap had one fantastic line in his inauguration speech that would have worked wonders for this country had he truly lived up to it: "*Walang kaikaibigan, walang kamakamaganak*" (no friends, no relatives), in the eyes of government. It is an idea still worth striving for.

That is what I'd like to see when our leaders meet to talk of the welfare of the family next year: not just how it may be protected from society but how society may be protected from it. John Locke once said that government governs best when it governs least. Perhaps we can say the same thing of the family: It thrives best when it meddles least.

One chainsaw can fell 20 trees in one night

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE MERALCO group is displaying interesting behavior. It had asked for "urgent help" from Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho on account of its financial difficulties, even before the Supreme Court ordered the firm to refund consumers for excess billings. In response to his old friend from Harvard days, Eugenio Lopez III, Camacho was quoted by the media as saying that he came up with a proposal for a "caretaker" type of arrangement, in order to help build up confidence in the firm's management. Under his plan, the government would nominate professional managers in place of Meralco's current ones, subject to confirmation or refusal by the Lopezes. Camacho stressed that his proposal was similar to the rehabilitation package designed a couple of years back for the Philippine National Bank. Obviously, he meant it as an open, above-board proposal as he merely faxed it to Lopez.

But what did the Lopezes do? They immediately attacked it in the media as a sinister plot for a takeover. No wonder *masama ang loob ni* Camacho. He felt betrayed.

* * *

This column is not for a government takeover of a public utility firm; I have consistently fought the idea of a takeover of Piatco's operation of Naia Terminal 3. But what is amazing in Meralco's case is that it has the temerity to treat government shabbily, when it is the one that needs help desperately. In the face of this shabby treatment, it is doubtless very tempting for government to just abandon Meralco and let it default on its P30 billion debts, but the problem is that, as Bangko Sentral Gov. Rafael Buenaventura pointed out, this would affect the banking system. Moreover, if Meralco goes under, the power situation could suffer. The firm doubtless knows that no matter what it does, it cannot be allowed to sink. Blackmail indeed, as the INQUIRER editorial put it, but one would think that even this would be done with some kind of civility. High-handed habits apparently die very hard with the imperious family at Meralco's helm even when its fortunes have turned.

* * *

Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez last weekend confiscated two chainsaws being used to cut down illegally decades-old narra and lauan trees in Quezon Province, as well as logs worth P6 million. He also padlocked the Kasibu Sawmill in the town of Real. These chainsaws are the first to be confiscated since President Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law RA 9175, the Chainsaw Act, nearly two weeks ago.

Alvarez explained the modus operandi. Worth from P35,000 to P40,000 each, the chainsaws are provided by illegal loggers to Baluga tribesmen to cut down trees. He noted that while only God can make a tree, one Baluga, working all night with a chainsaw, can fell as many as 20 trees. The trees are then sliced, and during the rainy season, the tribesmen float them down the Umiray River dividing Quezon and Aurora, for which they are paid P10 per board foot. Another group picks up the timber downstream for a fee of P25 per board foot, and they are processed in the sawmills before being sold.

* * *

There is a specific racket in each area, said Alvarez, but common to them is a systematic operation that involves the collusion of several sectors. In the Cotabato area, the illegal logs are cut into 40-ft. pieces that are then loaded into container vans disguised as export goods (and therefore not subject to checkpoints). These are shipped from various ports to North Harbor in Manila, from where they are picked up by illicit timber cutters. Alvarez pointed out that unlike the kaingin culture where poverty is at the root, illegal logging is pure business profit. The logging syndicates are in cahoots with some people in the DENR, which is why Alvarez has been been effecting a reshuffle there. His legal department is also busy prosecuting illegal loggers.

* * *

What is sad is that replenishment cannot catch up with wanton illegal logging. In addition, it has affected our water supply. Alvarez stressed that some 200 watersheds in the country fed by rain water from the mountains need rehabilitation before they run dry, as Cebu is now experiencing. But DENR funds allow only for the rehab of 20 watersheds. For instance, the Umiray River, where the DENR has been conducting raids in recent months, supplies water to Angat Dam through a tunnel cut into the Sierra Madre Mountains. In turn, Angat supplies Metro Manila's water. But Umiray's water, doubtless affected by the illegal logging in the mountains, is good only until 2006. In the meantime, 40 percent of Angat's 100,000 hectares of forests have already been logged.

* * *

Our water situation is being spotlighted as reports indicate that the giant paper products manufacturer, Kimberly Clark, is soon moving out of San Pedro in Laguna to Thailand. One reason is that the San Pedro area no longer yields as much water as it used to: only 150 tons compared to 200 tons before. The car manufacturing businesses, which are water-use intensive, in nearby Sta. Rosa could also be affected.

Clearly, the task of protecting our environment needs the help of the citizens. Toward this end, the DENR has proposed a program to adopt a mountain, a creek or a river. Concerned Church prelates like Ricardo Cardinal Vidal of Cebu and Bishop Perfecto Labayen of Quezon have thrown their support behind this project. The DENR will provide the nurseries where tree cloning will be undertaken. We citizens can do no less. Let's get involved.

* * *

Pampangueños have three days left to catch the mobile exhibit on the 100 years of the life and work of the brand-new saint, Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei, at the SM Mall Annex in San Fernando. From Dec. 2-15, the exhibit will be at the CSI Mall in Dagupan City.

Whose life is it anyway?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

REMEMBER the column I wrote on the American missionary in Bukidnon who forced women using intrauterine devices or IUDs to have the devices removed or else he would refuse to give them Communion?

Well, in last Friday's INQUIRER, there's a story about the results of the investigation conducted by the Population Commission office in Northern Mindanao. The story, which carried no by-line, identified the priest as Fr. Joseph Schwegman and confirmed that indeed he had "threatened to excommunicate" women who refused to have their IUDs removed. Some women, said Psyche Paler of Popcom Northern Mindanao, resorted to simply not lining up for communion during Mass rather than be confronted by Father Schwegman.

But at least 24 women in the parish of Malitbog, where Father Schwegman serves as pastor, agreed to have the IUDs removed. The foreign priest even brought in Dr. Marites Echavez of the Served Life Ministry to remove the devices. Paler accused Echavez of "duping" the staff of the municipal hospital into letting their facilities be used for the IUD removal, with Echavez allegedly telling the workers that she would only be "checking on the women." So when Echavez returned some months later with 12 more women, she was denied the use of the government health facilities and was forced to perform the removal in a private residence.

Of course, just as every woman has the right to use the family planning method of her choice, including the IUD, she also has the right to stop using a method if and when she feels like it. So Msgr. Rey Monsanto, spokesperson of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, is within his rights to back up Father Schwegman's claim that he did not "force" the women to stop using contraception. Still the incident raises so many issues about reproductive health and rights, and the human rights of women, as well as the responsibility of health professionals like Dr. Echavez and the humanity of religious leaders like Father Schwegman and Monsignor Monsanto.

* * *

THE MOST disturbing part of the report was the finding that some of the women had been using IUDs for as long as 11 years and that 19 of them had gotten pregnant as soon as the devices were removed. Because they had been using protection against pregnancy for so long, some of the women had already reached an age in which pregnancy is considered high-risk, for them and for their babies.

I'm sure Dr. Echavez is aware of the "five too's" of high-risk pregnancy. A woman risks her life if she gets pregnant when: she is too young (below 18), too old (above 35), has had too many pregnancies (more than three), has had them too close together (less than three years apart), and is too sick (with TB, anemia, high-blood pressure and other indicators).

Did Dr. Echavez, as a responsible medical professional, bother to take a health history of the women before she started removing their IUDs? Did she even bother to ask them how old they were, for Chrissakes? Did she go through the basic rudiments of a health examination by taking their blood pressure, checking for other health problems, asking them when their last pregnancy was and how many children they already had? Did she even ask the women if they were sure they were having their IUDs removed of their own free will and were not being somehow coerced?

One thing I can be sure of: she sure didn't counsel them on alternative methods of family planning, not even NFP!

* * *

SO I ask Dr. Echavez, Father Schwegman and Monsignor Monsanto: Will any of you answer for the consequences if any of the women who got pregnant die as a consequence of their high-risk pregnancy and delivery? Will you at least pray for their souls?

And what about their families? What about the children who could suddenly be bereft of a mother, when for the past 11 years or so, she was enjoying protection against an unwanted pregnancy and raising them responsibly? Will the zealous Father Schwegman feed them, raise them, send them to school? Or will he simply comfort the orphans with empty pious phrases and prayers?

Surely, the women had good reason to have an IUD inserted. Surely, they were strongly motivated by a desire to avoid pregnancy if they kept on using the devices for so long. Was it entirely fair and Christian of Father Schwegman to use the women's religion and their faith and trust to terrorize and bamboozle them so that they allowed such a violation of their privacy, an invasion of their bodies?

* * *

IN MY previous column on this incident, I denounced the almost gleeful violation of the principles of confidentiality and privacy that Father Schwegman abetted, when he asked volunteer health workers to "report" and point out the women in their communities who were using IUDs.

Now there seems to be an even graver violation of medical ethics by Dr. Echavez, who apparently ignored the serious health implications on women who she knew were risking an ill-timed and ill-advised pregnancy. Does not her being a doctor require her to inform the women beforehand of the risks they faced by getting pregnant at such a late stage?

And what have we to say of the ethics of a man like Father Schwegman? Or of a Church official like Monsignor Monsanto who can only say, in response to concerns raised by the Malitbog incident, that "it is a grave sin to use artificial methods of family planning, including the use of IUDs."

I am sick to heart as I write this. My suspicions have been proven true. The Church campaign against family planning is a campaign against life—the lives of women.

The National Archives revisited

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

ONE of the few early 19th-century structures left in Manila is the Intendencia building (1823) along the Pasig River where it was specifically built as a customs house. Like many other extant colonial buildings, it has had a checkered history. The worst of it was World War II and the fire in 1979, when we nearly lost it for good.

After the Americans took over, it became the first Office of the Archives in 1901, and then the first home of the Philippine Senate in 1916. It was again used as a Customs House in 1935 after the completion of the Legislative Building. It has at some point in time housed the mint and the offices of the central administration. Heavily damaged during the war, it was reconstructed after the liberation and became successively the offices of the National Treasury, the Central Bank and later the Commission on Elections. If it was the Comelec that occupied the building when it burned, one has to wonder if it had anything to do with the results of an election. Be that as it may, it was Ferdinand Marcos who designated it as the site of the National Archives and home of the country's historical collection.

But for decades after the fire, the ruins stood along the riverside, an eyesore. (Apparently with the perennial excuse that there's no money, the government has managed to leave public buildings in a state of disrepair or, like the Ayuntamiento, in ruins 60 years after the war from where some of the remaining piedra China has since disappeared.)

Finally, in 1998 a restoration of the Intendencia as the permanent home of the historical documents of the Filipino people was begun by then Director Ricardo Manapat. The project to finally create a home for the 13 million documents of the National Archives and to be able to finally have access to microfiche copies of the American period (when and if we ever get around to asking for them) without having to fly to Washington was certainly worthwhile even if the director was unlikely to win any popularity contests. (One wishes that our officials would finally realize that being in government doesn't mean being in contention for the Miss [or Mr.] Congeniality title.) In the future an agreement might be reached with the Spanish government for copies of documents pertaining to the Philippines in the Simancas Archives.

During the Estrada administration, Manapat was given the boot with the explanation that he had many enemies in Malacañang, regardless of whether his work was satisfactory or not, whether his projects were of service or not. This is nothing new, because ever since we managed to change Mr. Marcos for more of the same every Juan, Pedro and Jose has aimed to foist himself upon the hapless Filipino as a secretary or director.

Some of the improvements planned by Manapat were continued by Director Lina Concepcion. There is a digitalization project of the 13 million documents that is on going. To date 3 million images of Asuntos Criminales have been completed and stored in 738 CDs. Asuntos Civiles number over 200,000 and are stored in 36 discs. Students of history, professors and the general public can buy copies if they want. The scanned documents compliment the microfilming of the documents by the Spanish government, a project that will be continued by archives personnel together with Floro Microfilm Corp.

The remodeling of the portion of the National Library building where the Archives has been squatting since just about forever was finally completed. Certainly the dust level is lower.

In 2001 the Paper Conservation Laboratory, a gift from the Spanish government, was turned over to the Archives staff by Spanish Ambassador Tomas Rodriguez Pantoja with Dr. Jaime Laya representing the Philippine government as chair of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts. The personnel at the same time underwent intensive training in archival techniques and procedures.

If you were to visit our Archives (most of us probably don't know where its is located; it's on T.M. Kalaw), you would be surprised to see the antiquity of some of the towns in the country in documents bound together in books entitled "Ereccion de Pueblos." There are also wonderful 19th-century architectural drawings that are as fine as any you could buy abroad. Unfortunately some of them are drawn on linen cloth (like that of Bilibid Viejo) and have practically faded. These cannot be archived properly for lack of space.

After GMA's assumption of the presidency and Concepcion's retirement, Manapat was reappointed (much to the consternation of some people) and is now intent on the Intendencia's restoration (half of it should be done by June 2003) as well as upgrading the skills of its personnel and the facilities.

There are rumors that Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon plans to transfer his department to the Intendencia building. This would be unfortunate since those priceless 13 million documents will continue to be inadequately archived for lack of space nor will there be room for copies of the Simancas or documents from the American period. It does not even bear argument that the documents are certainly more important than housing 3,800 members of the tourism bureaucracy. They don't need a historical building for that. If the move comes to pass—and let us fervently hope the rumors aren't true—future Filipino generations will as usual be the poorer for it.

Crazy for love

YOUNG BLOOD

Benjielyn Credo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WE were talking about snakes and other creepy creatures when this man butted in. He said that snakes wouldn't harm us if we didn't disturb them.

He must be another patient here, I thought. He's also someone who needed a dose of Minoxidil to improve his crowning glory. The scar on his scalp was obvious. I wondered if he tried to slice his head to see if he really had a hypothalamus inside and failed.

I learned later that he was a victim of insanity. It was his daughter who was being given massive doses of Chlorpromazine and Haloperidol to bring her back to the real world. The man (let's call him "T") told us her daughter became crazy because of love. She went abroad, was maltreated by an employer, found a lover, got pregnant and quickly found out that his lover had another bitch with him.

T was himself a battered husband and he could relate to his daughter's tragedy. But he noticed that his daughter was doing some bizarre acts. She was extremely gloomy and exuberant at the same time, and T could hardly decipher what kind of ethereal being possessed her. One time she was so angry that she broke a dinner plate on her father's balding head.

The stories of patients in the mental institution almost always have the same underlying theme: they are there because of love. Another patient I encountered during my internship in the asylum claimed omniscience. He said he knew that a certain drug was made of egg and acid. Maybe when he was still sane, he tried to make a potion to win the heart of a woman who could not bear to look at a face even his mother couldn't have loved.

Someone complained that her husband continuously abused her and that her in-laws accused her of stealing their cash and valuables. She kept on romanticizing her husband's rude behavior but when asked where his husband was, she would answer matter-of-factly that he was peacefully lying in his filthy grave.

It is not my intention to break the rule of secrecy since these patients deserve some consideration regardless of their condition. I am just stupefied by the fact that people go craze over this thing called love. It's too mushy and ludicrous. I don't sense a close correlation between dopamine and overactivity and passion.

A Chinese writer once said, "Life is like a pubic hair on the toilet seat; sooner or later someone is going to piss you off." Why can't everybody accept that permanence is but a delusion? People fantasize about a happy ending and when it doesn't happen, they become as miserable as hell. Students seem to hate being stuck with Pharmacology but they find pleasure in being fixed in bed. Sooner or later they find their bellies stretching and their lives in havoc. Instead of marching on stage to receive the much-awaited diploma, they find themselves marching to the hospital's delivery room. They become more frantic when their lovers refuse to accept the tiny creature they've implanted out of so-called love. They breakdown and develop psychosis.

I don't think everybody should tolerate morons crawling like cockroaches in this cosmic garbage—all because of love. But I cannot deny the fact that romance adds substance to life. What is sane living anyway but a piece of crap?

Benjielyn R. Credo, 20, is a pharmacist.

Jurassic chivalry

Kala Barba

TIME: 8:43 a.m.

Day: Wednesday.

Mood: Patriotic, ready for argument (due to big breakfast).

Situation: A crowded MRT coach. Six strapping young men fill the seats, while five women hold on to the handrails in front of them, myself included.

Big deal: One woman is pregnant.

Assessment: There's something wrong with this picture.

Plan of action: Strike up a conversation with fellow passengers in an attempt to correct the wrong.

Me to Yuppie Woman on my right (in a subtle voice yet loud enough for the men to hear): Isn't there something wrong with this picture? (Looks at the men, then to Pregnant Woman on my left, then at the men once again.)

Yuppie Woman (picking up my train of thought): There certainly is. (Looks pointedly at the men sitting comfortably on their asses.)

The six men shift uncomfortably in their seats, but try to look cool.

Me: I mean, I myself wouldn't mind but there is such a thing as basic courtesy.

Pregnant Woman listens curiously to our conversation. One of the men looks at a fellow passenger, who shrugs in response. Another still tries to look unconcerned, while still another yawns and pretends to fall asleep.

Yuppie Woman: I know! I believe in equality, but this is ridiculous.

Me: Chivalry is dead. (Pauses to let words sink in and hopefully be acted upon.)

Pregnant Woman looks at me and Yuppie Woman, then blinks at the men who are now blinking up at her. Then, victory: One of the men finally does what he had to do. He stands up and offers his seat to Pregnant Woman, who hesitates at first, but sits down finally.

Yuppie Woman smiles at me. I smile back. We both smile at Pregnant Woman, who gives us a tentative smile and says: I'm not pregnant.

Needless to say, that was the longest train ride me and Yuppie Woman had ever taken.

Moral of the story: Men must realize that in a world where we scream for equality, women still have an eye open for chivalry, though we don't admit it. It is not a do-or-die situation. We have adapted and accepted it, but it is like "Jurassic Park" where extinction is accepted, but when dinosaurs are revived, it becomes a good topic of conversation.

The underlying truth: Chivalry is okay once in a while. Remember that "Jurassic Park 2" was not warmly embraced by the public. Then a total of five people in the universe watched "Jurassic Park 3," and only two out of those three thought it was a good movie, namely, its producer and his co-producer.

One thing commuters should remember: Non-pregnant women wear clothes for pregnant women for reasons other than pregnancy. Learn to distinguish so that you can be politically correct, and get off the MRT with your pride intact.

Final point: You can't please everyone you meet in life.

Kala Barba, 23, works as a freelance graphic artist/writer/illustrator. She graduated from UP College of Fine Arts.

LETTERS

IRRI on jasmine rice issue

I READ with interest Ceres Doyo's recent column, headlined "Cry Jasmine," and welcome her efforts to focus public attention on this very important issue. However, she also reported some factual errors, which she could have avoided had she contacted the International Rice Research Institute while preparing her article. Let me take this opportunity to support her interest in the vitally important issue of genetic resources by inviting her to visit the International Rice Genebank at IRRI. She can then see for herself the accuracy of the following corrections.

Firstly, the column says: "God knows what other seeds foreigners have acquired from IRRI." Actually, as a public research organization, IRRI is constantly checked and monitored by the media and many of its stakeholders. Moreover, the rice genebank operates under the aegis of an inter-governmental body called the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, of which Thailand is a member and to which IRRI fully reports its management of the genebank. All seed transfers at IRRI are a matter of public record and are very closely monitored and supervised.

Only a small number of NGOs have "denounced" IRRI over its handling of genetic resources. The majority of NGOs and governments recognize the crucial role IRRI plays in this area and are very supportive, while at the same time closely monitoring and commenting on what we do.

Without doubt, jasmine rice is one of the most important rice varieties IRRI holds in trust on behalf of the FAO in the International Rice Genebank. It was freely given to IRRI by the Royal Thai government in the full knowledge that we would make it available to rice breeders around the world. As the world's leading rice exporter (with estimated rice sales last year of about $1.2 billion), Thailand has benefited enormously from the free and open sharing of rice varieties over the 42 years of IRRI's existence. It should also be pointed out that while American scientists may have the expertise to produce a similar jasmine rice variety, they can never hope to copy the unique soil, climatic, cultural and environmental conditions of Thailand to produce real jasmine rice. Also even if the American scientists ignored their agreement not to seek a patent, it would be impossible for them to patent the jasmine name at the expense of Thailand, whose government has already said it would challenge this legally. Precedent suggests Thailand would win.

Finally, Doyo said, "IRRI has denied involvement." If you check our website or do any further research on the jasmine rice case, you would know that we have publicly confirmed our direct involvement in the sharing of this variety. We did this because the issue of genetic resources is too important to allow false information to circulate and IRRI is committed to helping all those interested better understand what's involved.

We hope you also will have the commitment to keep reporting on genetic resources and providing fair, factual and accurate information to all.

—RUARAIDH SACKVILLE HAMILTON, head,
Genetic Resources Center,
International Rice Research Institute, 6776 Ayala Ave, Suite 1009, Condominium Center,
Makati City

Deaths not linked to Viagra use

IN RINA Jimenez-David's column last Nov. 12, titled "Viagra and Postinor," she wrote that when Viagra was approved for use and distribution here in the Philippines by the Bureau of Food and Drugs, few questions were raised about its safety and efficacy even if it was found to have caused the deaths of some elderly men in the United States and Britain. I believe there is a need to make the following comments on this matter.

I wish to clarify that no causal relationship has been established between Sildenafil (Viagra) and the post-marketing cardiovascular events and deaths that have been reported. The United States' FDA and our BFAD continue to reaffirm the safety and effectiveness of Viagra when used poperly.

To date, Viagra has been approved in over 110 countries, with over 100 million prescriptions written for over 20 million patients suffering from erectile dysfunction. Well-controlled studies have shown no difference in the incidence of heart attack or death between patients treated with Viagra and those given placebo. An analysis of more than 11,000 patient years of experience with Viagra from clinical trials found no difference in the incidence of heart attack, cardiovascular mortality, all cause-mortality and stroke in men taking Viagra and those on placebo (sugar pill). Viagra has also been studied intensively in patients with heart disease such as coronary artery disease and heart failure which support the finding that Viagra is well tolerated in patients with cardiovascular disease.

In a recent observational study done in the United Kingdom covering nearly 6,000 patients followed for approximately five months, independent investigators have found no increased risk of heart attack or death from heart disease with erectile dysfunction who have filled a prescription for Viagra compared with the general UK population. A similar study done among approximately 4,000 Filipino men who suffered from erectile dysfunction and were prescribed Viagra showed no incidence of serious adverse events within the three-year study period (1999-2001).

I wish to emphasize, however, that Viagra is contraindicated in patients who are on nitrates in any form and that prior to treating their erectile dysfunction, patients with cardiovascular disease should be evaluated properly by their doctors.

—ROMEO A. DIVINAGRACIA, M.D.,
cardiologist, Philippine Heart Center, East Avenue, Diliman
Quezon City

Real Imelda a wonderful lady

I HAVE had the privilege of knowing Imelda Marcos from the days when she was still the first lady. For nearly one decade, she has been my next-door neighbor and very close friend.

The real Imelda I have known and continue to respect is a warm and compassionate human being, who is incapable of concocting the schemes she is being accused of doing. There are many more like me, who quietly support this wonderful lady who has maintained her composure through the roughest and most cruel trials.

For the past years, I have seen many hangers-on come and go. Some of them were uninvited. They were never made to feel unwelcome, not even when they abused the generosity of their hostess, who never has any harsh words for anyone.

Time has a way of revealing the truth, and when that time comes, the world will see the truth about those five self-proclaimed "loyalists."

—DR. ELEUTERIO "TEYET" PASCUAL
34D Pacific Plaza, Makati

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Women's bodies and religious wars

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

RECENT violence in Nigeria, supposedly over the Miss World Pageant, has once again focused attention on Islamic fundamentalism, reinforcing popular perceptions of a "clash of civilizations" between fanatically misogynist (anti-women) Muslims on one hand, and "pro-women" Christians on the other.

But what happened in Nigeria is really another episode in a war that has been going on for centuries, a war fought in the name of religion over women's bodies. It is a vicious war that has not been the monopoly of conservative Muslims. Today, all over the world, Christian fundamentalists also seek ways of controlling women's bodies.

The violence in Nigeria is depicted mainly as a protest against the Miss World contest. No doubt, this was a main triggering factor, with religious conservatives seeing the contest as a violation of standards of female modesty.

But there was more to all this, a series of culturally insensitive gaffes on the part of both Miss World organizers and the Nigerian government. The Miss World activities, including, originally, the pageant itself, were scheduled in the middle of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting and reflection. I would think Christians would have reacted, too, if a Miss World pageant were held during Holy Week.

Eventually, what precipitated the violence came from within Nigeria itself. An article in a Lagos daily, This Day, suggested that the prophet Mohammed would have married one of the beauty contestants if he had seen the contest. Remarks against the prophet Mohammed, whether sexually related or not, can evoke violent reactions, but again such sentiments are not exclusive to Muslims. More conservative Christians express outrage whenever a "human" side to Jesus Christ is portrayed, especially if there are suggestions that he may have been sexual.

We also need new perspectives when he look at the opposition to beauty contests. Such sentiments certainly aren't limited to conservative Muslims. Feminists and people on the left of the political spectrum see those beauty contests as exploitative, a commodification of women's bodies. In many Western countries, particularly in Europe, the beauty contests mean little, a quaint American anachronism that deserves only passing press coverage in the form of brief articles buried inside the papers.

At first blush, the opposition from Muslim conservatives may seem to converge with this idea that women's bodies are being commodified. But the opposition is very different here, taking on a tenor more similar to our anti-pornography crusaders. It is the "shameful" exposure of women's bodies that is being protested. Here, they share the view of Christian fundamentalists who see women as dangerous, tempting men to sin. Women are meant for the pleasure only of their husbands, and are preferably kept shielded from the public, or more specifically, from lustful eyes of men.

It took the Miss World controversy for the world to perk up and look at the problems of religious misogyny in Nigeria. Several months before the contest, groups fighting for women's rights had been desperately trying to drum up the protest against Nigerian sharia (religious law) courts that had sentenced women to death, in one case allegedly for premarital sex and the other for adultery. The controversial death sentences weren't quite newsworthy until the violence erupted over the Miss World contest. In a paradoxical twist, some Miss World contestants themselves had threatened to boycott the pageant to protest the death sentences.

Western protests against Muslim religious fundamentalism are notoriously opportunistic. For years, Afghan women suffered under the Taliban's religious police, but the world didn't care until US President George Bush used the women's rights issue as one of his many excuses to invade. These days he's suddenly become a defender of women's rights again, this time in Iraq, as he prepares for another invasion.

But Bush is himself a Christian fundamentalist, with a terrible record against women. He has vetoed funding for international family planning programs, supposedly to preserve the sanctity of human life. Yet the slash in funding now endangers many reproductive health programs that have precisely tried to counteract religious fundamentalism, including the versions from Muslims, to advance women's rights.

The global trend is alarming, with the last decade's gains in women's rights slowly being reversed. During a recent international conference, US government delegates proposed the deletion of terms like "reproductive health," "sexual health" and "reproductive rights" from international documents, supposedly because such terms mean abortion. We hear these voices in the Philippines as well, as in the opposition to a reproductive health bill, again using the abortion bogey as an excuse.

It is in this context that we can understand what happened recently in Bukidnon, where 24 women were said to have had their intrauterine devices (IUD) removed out of fear of excommunication by the Catholic parish priest. Eleven have reportedly become pregnant since the IUD removals.

Catholic Church officials deny having forced the women, but think hard about what the threat of excommunication, exemplified by a denial of Holy Communion, means in a rural community.

The opposition to beauty contest from religious fundamentalist isn't about the exploitation of women. It stems from fear that women might become too independent, too sexual, as exemplified by the display of their bodies. In the same token, the opposition to contraception by conservative Catholics can be deceiving, couched in such terms as "protecting women's bodies from chemical poisons."

In reality, the conservatives are fearful of the potentials of women's power. When women become aware of the power they have over their bodies, over sexuality and over reproduction, they will begin to question the power of religious authoritarianism, including the patriarchal institutions that propagate that authoritarianism. That is what is so frightening to the conservative, whether in Nigeria, the United States or the Philippines.

Politics in smoking ban

I WAS 15 when I began smoking cigarettes and at 27 I was a confirmed chain smoker. I am now in my 50s, and I have tried to quit smoking a million times and never succeeded.

The city ordinance in Davao banning cigarette smoking in designated public and some private places brings relief to cigarette smokers. But I can't help thinking there are some flaws that the city council overlooked. For example, smoke from a gasoline or diesel-fed car running for a few minutes is equivalent to that of a million lighted cigarettes. What I am more concerned with are the modern antics of the city government on how to milk a mammoth yellow elephant with the 2004 elections not too far off.

—EDUARDO PIN CAPIRI,
Davao City

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Erap wants same treatment as Atong's

From page A1

ruling that granted Charlie "Atong" Ang's motion for bail was a point in their favor.

Ang, the subject of an extradition case in the United States, is a co-accused of Estrada's in the historic plunder case being heard by the Sandiganbayan.

Specifically, Estrada's lawyers said they would use the US decision to further discredit Estrada's chief accuser and "Juetengate" whistle-blower, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Manuel Pamaran, one of Estrada's four court-appointed lawyers, said they would soon present to the Sandiganbayan the Nevada court ruling that purportedly described the charges against Ang—which basically applies also to Estrada—as having come from a "corrupt" government official.

"The US court was brutally frank (in saying) that he's corrupt," Pamaran told reporters, referring to Singson.

Pamaran said the decision showed how "impartial" American justice was "to political events." He did not elaborate.

It is not clear how the ruling can help the defense, since Singson had already admitted to collecting the money from the illegal numbers game for Estrada. More than 50 witnesses have also testified for the prosecution.

House arrest

Pamaran noted that US District Magistrate Lawrence Leavitt granted Ang's house arrest petition largely based on Singson's testimony both at the Senate impeachment trial and the Sandiganbayan hearings.

That Singson was also corrupt has been the basis of the defense panel's long-held position that he can never be a "credible witness," Pamaran said after yesterday's hearing.

Noel Malaya, another defense counsel, said he was still trying to obtain a copy of the ruling by e-mail, which his team would then furnish the Sandiganbayan.

Leavitt allowed Ang to go under house arrest provided he can post a property bail amounting to $300,000 and prove that this came from legitimate sources. Ang was also ordered to wear a belt monitor 24 hours a day.

Both Pamaran and Malaya said the ruling "will have a persuasive effect on the plunder case."

A third Estrada lawyer, Irene Jurado, added: "If Chavit was found to be lying in the US, the more Filipinos should consider him a liar."

Plan belittled

But Senior State Prosecutor Alex Padilla belittled the Estrada camp's plan.

He doubted whether the ruling on Ang's extradition case—being of "foreign jurisprudence"—would have a relevance in the criminal proceedings against Estrada et al.

In his testimony, Singson owned up to being Estrada's bagman for jueteng collections as well as having doctored auditing reports to cover up a diverted sum amounting to P130 million.

Meanwhile, a bank officer returned to court yesterday to detail how funds entered the Velarde account.

Antonio Martinez Fortuna, operations manager of Equitable PCIBank's Pacific Star branch in Makati City, presented deposit slips and checks showing that a total of "P481 million" entered the Velarde account in just a span of three months.

British Boy Scouts unfazed by Abu warning

From page A1

tion" with their local counterparts, De Leon said.

The activities, however, do not include camping. Upon their arrival, the scouts will be entrusted to foster parents, in whose homes they will stay for five days.

Warning

In an interview with ABS-CBN television broadcast Monday, Abu Sayyaf leader Hamsiraji Sali said that Iraq was planning to send at least three suicide bombers to attack civilian targets in the Philippines. No other details of the planned attack were given.

"The Philippines is a friend of the US government. It is helping the US government so the Arabs are always targeting our country," said Sali, one of five Abu Sayyaf leaders on a US wanted list of terrorists.

"You know, terrorists like us and those outside the Philippines are difficult to fight with. Our government should think twice about supporting President George W. Bush," Sali said in Filipino.

But Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, chief of the Southern Command, dismissed Sali's threats as propaganda. "A guy like this talking about Saddam Hussein must have some grand illusions," Abaya said.

Sali also said the signing by Manila and Washington last week of the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement would trigger terrorist attacks against the Philippines.

The accord allows each country's military forces to exchange supplies such as food, water and fuel, and services such as communications, transport and medical assistance, during mutually approved exercises and operations.

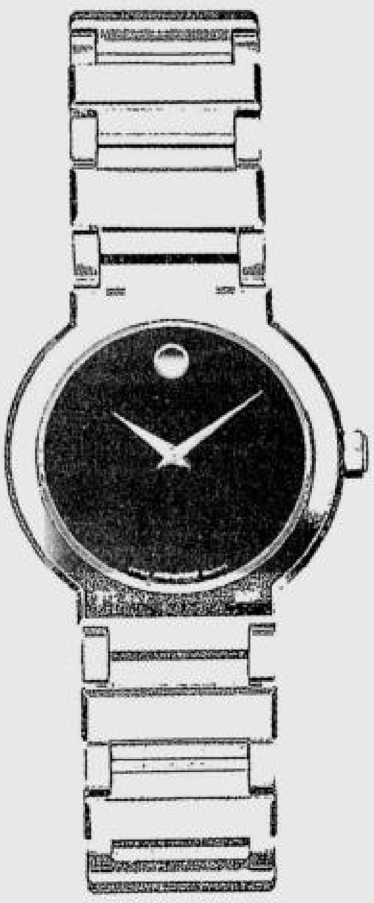
Last week, Sali told ABS-CBN that he had broken ties with the main faction of the Abu Sayyaf led by Khadaffy Janjalani because of unspecified differences. He has said in radio and television interviews that he was planning to surrender and help the government develop Basilan, where he and the Abu Sayyaf are based.

The US government has offered up to $5 million earlier this year for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of Sali and four other Abu Sayyaf leaders—Janjalani, Abu Sabaya, Abu Sulaiman and Isnilon Hapilon.

The five were indicted in the United States this year for last year's kidnapping of three Americans, two of whom died in Abu Sayyaf custody. An American was rescued during the bloody commando assault in Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte, in June.

The Abu Sayyaf has been suspected of carrying out a string of deadly bombings and mass kidnappings. According to the PNP, a captured Abu Sayyaf explosives expert earlier confessed that his group was planning bomb attacks on the US Embassy, Philippine Stock Exchange, Edsa-Ortigas flyover, shopping malls and commercial establishments in Metro Manila.

With a report from AP



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Hunt on for Yemeni

HONG KONG—A senior al-Qaida operative from Yemen is one of three "critical" suspects being hunted by authorities over the Bali bombing, Time magazine reported Monday.

In their latest edition, Time identified the Yemeni as Syafullah, whose activities included the 1996 bombing of a US military barracks in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 servicemen.

Time said one of the other two "top tier" suspects was an Indonesian militant named Syawal, who was an instructor at an al-Qaida training camp near Poso on the island of Sulawesi.

The other man police are hunting is a Malaysian, Zubair, who reportedly fought in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and is suspected of leading the surveillance and mapping team for the Oct. 12 Bali attack.

If proved, Syafullah could be the first member of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization, which carried out last year's Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, to be directly linked to the Bali bombings.

Although some Indonesians and many foreign governments have blamed al-Qaida for the Bali attacks, authorities have yet to arrest, or publicly name, any al-Qaida member.

Indonesian authorities say 12 people were involved in the attacks, in which more than 190 people died, and have already arrested two leading suspects.

Police last week arrested Imam Samudra, 32, who allegedly masterminded the attacks and is suspected of being a leading member in the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiah.

Authorities have said that Samudra has admitted ordering the attacks as part of a holy war to avenge so-called injustices against Muslims.

The first major suspect arrested was 40-year-old mechanic Amrozi, who is alleged to have been involved in building the bombs. *AFP*

IMAM Samudra (left), alleged mastermind of the Bali bombings, is brought to police headquarters in Jakarta. REUTERS

Key suspect in Bali blast transferred to Jakarta

JAKARTA—The alleged mastermind of the Bali bombing was brought to Jakarta early Monday for questioning over a string of earlier attacks and will be confronted with witnesses including a Malaysian awaiting execution, police said.

Imam Samudra, 32, and three associates also arrested in West Java on Thursday will face three to four days of interrogation, Chief Investigator I Made Mangku Pastika said.

Police say Samudra has admitted ordering the Bali attack, which killed more than 190 people, as part of a holy war to avenge injustice against Muslims.

"This is a sacred struggle, not a heinous one . . . Allah is great," Imam Samudra said calmly as he was taken into national police headquarters, according to the Detikcom online news service.

Samudra—along with associates Abdul Rauf, alias Syam; Yudi, alias Andri or Andri Oktavia; and a man identified only as Amin—will answer questions on previous attacks that include Christmas Eve 2000 church bombings in Jakarta and on Batam island near Singapore, the July 2001 bombings of two Jakarta churches and the Atrium shopping center blast in the city in August 2001.

Edward Aritonang, spokesperson for the Bali blast probe, said Samudra and the others would be confronted with other witnesses, including a Malaysian called Dani who has been sentenced to death for the Atrium blast.

The blast injured several people, including Dani who lost a leg. Police say Samudra has admitted involvement in that explosion.

National police chief Da'i Bachtiar and Australian investigators conducting a joint probe say Samudra is a leading member of the Jemaah Islamiah regional terror group, which in turn is believed to be linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. *AFP*

Suicide bombing evidence alarms Australian cops

CANBERRA—Evidence suggesting a suicide bomber may have detonated one of the Bali blasts has added a new dimension to the threat posed by Islamic militants in the region, Australian police said on Monday.

Indonesian police said last week the first of three bombs to explode on Oct. 12 on the Indonesian resort island was detonated by a suicide bomber, a method earlier ruled out by Australian police who are jointly investigating the blasts.

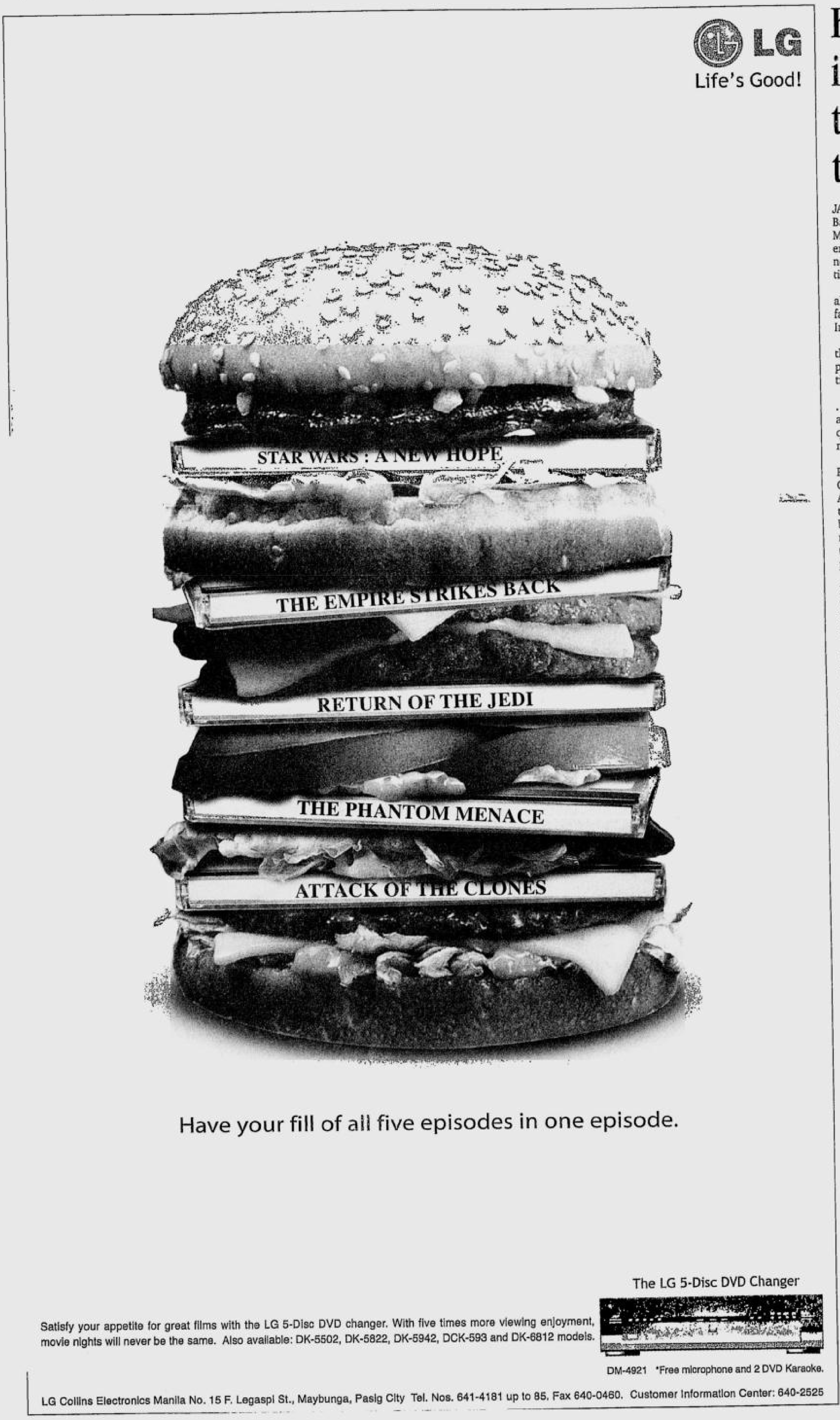
"I think it adds a very different character and a very different flavor to this whole investigation into this whole incident," Australian Federal Police general manager Ben McDevitt told a news conference in the Australian capital.

"What we're talking about now is not only someone wishing to inflict enormous casualties on innocent people, but the desire to do so is so strong that they're actually prepared to sacrifice their own life in achieving that aim," he said.

McDevitt said forensic evidence was consistent with the testimony of the suspected mastermind of the attack, Imam Samudra, that a man carrying 500 grams to 1 kg of TNT likely detonated the first blast in Paddy's Irish Pub. Seconds later, a massive car bomb exploded outside the nearby Sari Club.

More than 180 people, about 90 of them Australian, died in the blasts. Hundreds more were wounded.

McDevitt's comments come after Australian security forces were put on heightened alert last week after the government said it had received "credible information" about a general threat over the next two months, believed linked to the al-Qaida network. *Reuters*



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Gas carrier still ablaze in HK

HONG KONG—A ship carrying 20,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas was still ablaze east of Hong Kong Monday, more than 30 hours after the fire started, rescue officials said.

However, the fire seemed to be dying down, although there was still a remote chance its cargo could ignite, causing a massive explosion, Maritime Rescue Coordination Center spokesperson Capt. George Kwok said.

"The fire seems not as strong as it was when it started," said Kwok, after inquiring with authorities in Chinese city of Shenzhen who have taken over the case.

The fire started at the back of the 44,000-ton Panamanian-registered gas carrier early Sunday, raising fears it could ignite the flammable fuel stored in the front of the vessel.

"Although the possibility is remote, it does not mean there is no such possibility of explosion," Kowk said, adding that the "weather is favorable" for keeping the fire at bay.

Rescue officials said Sunday wind was keeping the flames away from the gas in the hold of the boat, anchored more than 30 km east of Hong Kong.

Kwok said Shenzhen authorities had several fire boats in the vicinity. Authorities in Shenzhen had taken over the task of dealing with the blaze as the ship was anchored in Chinese waters.

"We were told assistance from Hong Kong is no longer required," Kwok said, adding that Hong Kong fire boats had withdrawn.

Shenzhen authorities declined to provide further information. *AFP*

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HIV infection caused by artificial insemination

TOKYO—A Japanese woman who was given incorrect artificial insemination treatment using sperm from her HIV-positive husband has been infected with the AIDS virus, a researcher said Monday.

It is the first case reported in Japan where artificial insemination has caused HIV-infection.

The woman, whose name and age were not disclosed, underwent the treatment at a hospital in western Japan several years ago, said Hideji Hanabusa, a doctor specializing in hematology at Ogikubo Hospital in Tokyo.

"But the artificial insemination treatment was not properly carried out," said Hanabusa, who recently treated the patient and found her to be HIV-positive.

According to the doctor, the hospital skipped several procedures, including the so-called "swim-up" in which active sperm which have been filtered in a centrifuge can be stripped from leucocytes and lymph cells subject to the virus.

"We also found another case in which artificial insemination was carried out improperly, but the patient was not found to be infected," Hanabusa said.

"If we don't deal with such inadequate practices, patients will face fear of infection not only with the HIV virus but also hepatitis-C and other dangerous viruses," Hanabusa warned.

"Guidelines and screening procedures for artificial insemination treatments must be introduced as a matter of urgency," he added.

Hanabusa is to report the two cases at a meeting of the Japan Society for AIDS Research, scheduled to open Thursday in Nagoya, central Japan.

The first successful birth using sperm from an HIV-infected father in Japan was reported in 2001, using a method pioneered in Italy and Spain.

Both mother and child have been confirmed infection-free. Several other successful cases have since been reported.

In October an infection-free baby boy was born after the mother was treated by Hanabusa in what was claimed as the world's first case of in-vitro fertilization using sperm stripped of the HIV virus. AFP

AIDS-infected woman to wed healthy man

SHANGHAI, China—In a first, China will allow a person infected with the virus that causes AIDS to marry someone healthy, a matchup aimed at raising awareness of the deadly disease, state media said Monday.

The unidentified couple, a woman with HIV and her healthy fiance, will hold their wedding in Beijing on Sunday to mark World AIDS Day, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Xinhua said health officials and experts invited the couple to the capital to lift the profile of a conference being held there on HIV, which has infected at least 1 million people in China.

The 28-year-old woman, a former drug addict who contracted the disease from using dirty needles, has been living for four years with her husband-to-be, who is still healthy, the Shanghai Daily reported.

The couple got approval to marry from officials in their home in Guizhou, a poor southern region crossed by smuggling routes used to bring heroin and other drugs in from Southeast Asia.

Drug use has been cited as a leading cause of HIV infection by Beijing, which says 1 million people are infected with HIV in China.

Experts warn the number is higher and could reach 10 million by the end of the decade. *AP*

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Attacks sign of surge of anti-Americanism

KUWAIT CITY—In Kuwait, two American soldiers are shot on a quiet stretch of desert highway. In Lebanon, an American nurse is murdered at a clinic. In Jordan, a US diplomat is gunned down in his front yard.

As US soldiers prepare for possible war with Iraq, and as violence continues in American-allied Israel and the Palestinian territories, a series of attacks on Americans in the Middle East has sparked fears that even friendly nations like Kuwait are no longer enclaves of safety.

"The thing that is scary, that's different this time, is that it seems more organized," said Felix Reinberg, an American engineer who has spent 11 years working in Kuwait. He spoke days after the US soldiers were injured in the highway shooting Thursday. "They've never really targeted Americans or Westerners in Kuwait."

The Kuwaiti government, eager to keep good relations with Washington, has portrayed the shooting as the act of a single, mentally ill man, not a reflection of broad anti-American feelings. But local press reports say the suspect, Khaled al-Shimmiri, told investigators he hated Americans and Jews.

Many here fear the attack—Kuwait's second in which American soldiers were shot—will not be the last.

"It's obvious these incidents will happen, and will continue to happen," said Abdullah Sahar, a political scientist at Kuwait University. "Kuwait is a very small society, and this is a very small country, and the Americans are everywhere: You go to the markets and you see Americans, you go on the street and you see Americans, maybe your neighbors are Americans."

Kuwait is, in many ways, emblematic of how complicated America's image problems and security concerns can be in the Middle East.

The vast majority of this oil-rich nation is pro-American, grateful to the US-led coalition that drove out Saddam Hussein's army in the 1991 Gulf War. Thousands of American workers and more than 10,000 US soldiers have been welcomed.

Even America's harshest critics want those troops to remain—though they insist a deep hatred lies beneath the placid surface. *AP*

300 solons urge Bush to avoid war with Iraq

SYDNEY—More than 300 lawmakers and groups, including members of British premier Tony Blair's Labor Party and the Anglican Church, called on US President George W. Bush and other world leaders on Monday to avoid war in Iraq.

In a letter signed by peace activists, environmentalists, anti-nuclear campaigners and politicians, the protesters said nuclear states, especially the United States, should eradicate their own nuclear arms stocks before tackling others over weapons of mass destruction.

"The possession of nuclear weapons, whether by Iraq or else by the US, Russia, China, the UK, France, India, Pakistan and Israel is equally unacceptable," the letter said.

"As long as these countries continue to possess nuclear weapons, others will seek to do likewise."

The letter, sent to Bush, Blair and the leaders of Russia, France, Germany, Canada and Australia on the eve of the first UN weapons inspections in Iraq in four years, was signed by 318 organizations and politicians.

Ranging from Britain to Egypt, signatories included Anglican Church leaders, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the US Peace Council and green groups like Friends of the Earth Australia.

The 70 lawmakers included Frank Cook, Alice Mahon, David Drew and David Chayton of Blair's Labor Party, several European Parliament members and others from around the world.

The signatories appealed to Washington not to launch a preemptive strike on Iraq with no basis in international law, and to seek a peaceful solution to its confrontation with Iraq through the United Nations. *Reuters*

Students hurl 15 firebombs at US base

SEOUL—South Korean student protesters threw firebombs at a US military base in Seoul on Monday in a fresh protest against the acquittal last week of two US soldiers involved in an accident that killed two girls.

Some 20 students tossed 15 home-made Molotov cocktails at Camp Gray, a small storage facility several kilometers from the US Forces Korea (USFK) headquarters, local police and US military officials said.

In separate US court-martial trials last week, the driver and navigator of a US armored vehicle were found not guilty of negligent homicide in a June accident in which two 13-year-old schoolgirls were crushed while walking on a village road.

The emotive case was tried as South Korea and the United States were struggling to maintain a united stance in dealing with North Korea's nuclear arms program, which was revealed last month and has put a damper on improving North-South ties.

The acquittals angered local activists and sparked anti-US rallies by opponents of the presence of 37,000 US troops in South Korea. On Saturday, 500 people demonstrated outside the USFK headquarters in central Seoul. *Reuters*

ECUADOREAN presidential candidate Lucio Gutierrez celebrates his victory, Nov. 24, in Quito, Ecuador. AFP

Ex-coup leader is Ecuador president

QUITO—A former coup leader viewed as a crusader against corruption won Ecuador's presidential runoff election Sunday, defeating a billionaire businessman who socializes with America's rich and powerful.

With 97 percent of the votes counted, Lucio Gutierrez, a cashiered army colonel, had 54.3 percent of the votes compared with 45.7 percent for Alvaro Noboa, who heads a banana and shipping empire that includes 110 companies.

The 45-year-old president-elect, who led a 2000 coup that toppled a highly unpopular president seen as corrupt, campaigned as an anti-corruption crusader. That appealed strongly to voters fed up with leaders who plunder government coffers.

In a television interview Sunday night, Gutierrez sought to reassure Ecuadoreans and international financial circles that his election was not a threat in any way to investors.

Since the first round of elections in October, Gutierrez has moderated his nationalistic rhetoric, even traveling to New York to woo Wall Street investors.

"I want to give the greatest of assurances to the national productive sector, the national financial sector and the international financial sector," he said.

He said Ecuadoreans would find him to be "very tolerant and respectful of human rights, the right to private property . . . health and education."

Gutierrez has insisted that he is not another example of a leftist, anti-globalization trend at work in Latin America such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brazil, and front-running presidential candidate Adolfo Rodriguez Saa in Argentina.

"I am not a communist," he said during the campaign. "I am a profoundly Christian man who respects private property and human rights."

In Washington, US Department of State spokesperson Anne Marks said, "We congratulate Gutierrez, who, at this point, appears to be the victor."

From early in the day voters from throughout the Andean nation—highland Indians in traditional ponchos and fedora hats, coastal fishermen, urban shantytown dwellers—tried to decide which of the two populists might keep his word to improve their lives.

Ecuador's two-decade-old democracy has suffered through trying times in recent years. Since 1996, this small nation of 12 million people has had five presidents. Two of them were driven from office in the midst of political and economic upheaval.

The 52-year-old Noboa, who counts among his friends several members of the Kennedy clan and Hollywood actors such as Charlton Heston, said his election would attract millions of dollars in foreign investment from his contacts in international financial circles, creating jobs for Ecuador's unemployed masses.

Before casting his vote in Quito, Gutierrez charged that Noboa, making use of his wealth, had bribed election officials in three provinces to insure his victory.

"People are telling me: 'Lucio, you're winning, but be careful. They're trying to buy (the elections),'" he said.

Marco Zambrano, head of the election board in Manabi province, one of the provinces Gutierrez mentioned, immediately denied the accusation, and international election monitors said they had seen no signs of wrongdoing.

Gutierrez earned his reputation as a corruption fighter when he led a group of disgruntled junior Army officers and 5,000 Indian protesters in a coup in January 2000 that ousted President Jamil Mahuad in the midst of Ecuador's worst economic crisis in decades.

Gutierrez was expelled from the Army for his rebellion and spent six months in a military prison. *AP*

Saudis bristle at rap they're soft on terror

WASHINGTON—Saudi officials, facing harsh accusations that they are soft on terrorism, say they are checking records to see how money from the wife of their US ambassador might have eventually gone to supporters of the Sept. 11 attacks.

In trying to calm the latest strain in their alliance with the United States, they called "crazy" any suggestion she intended to support the hijackers.

Embassy officials spent the weekend having bankers pore over the records of Princess Haifa al-Faisal, wife of Ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan, to figure out how thousands of dollars in monthly payments from her account apparently ended up in the wrong hands, said Saudi foreign policy adviser Adel al-Jubeir.

Some of the money apparently went into the accounts of two men who US officials think provided financial support to hijackers.

A parade of senators, including some who doubted the princess meant to help terrorists, upbraided the Saudi government on Sunday's television talk shows for what they saw as years of complicity in anti-American radicalism.

Saudis have a history of "buying off extremism," even if only by averting their gaze from it, said Sen. Joseph Biden, outgoing chair of the Senate foreign relations committee.

It's "part of a saga where the Saudis don't know, have not checked, are not nearly conscientious enough in determining whether or not a 'charity' is genuinely a charity or a front for, or a back door for, terrorists or terrorist-sympathizing organizations or individuals," Biden said on CNN's "Late Edition."

President George W. Bush's aides, for whom the matter is a troubling turn as they work to shore up Saudi support for a possible war with Iraq, did not join in the recriminations.

There might be a legitimate explanation for the payments, a senior White House official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, credited the Saudis with helping in the antiterror war, in quiet ways that bring them no credit in the West but also do not attract the attention of fundamentalist elements at home. *AP*

Security forces end Kashmir siege

JAMMU, India—Security forces ended a siege by suspected Muslim militants of two Hindu temples in Indian Kashmir on Monday after the bloodiest weekend since a new government took power in the state on a peace ticket.

Police said that the siege, during which 13 people died, ended when a lone surviving militant who had taken refuge in a house near the temples was shot dead after what appeared to be a last-ditch bid to escape.

Police chief A.K. Suri told reporters a caller claiming to be from the banned Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba had telephoned him claiming responsibility for the raid and threatening more such attacks.

Security forces earlier killed another militant following the attack on Sunday on the 150-year-old Raghunath temple complex and the Rupyawali temple nearby in Jammu, winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Suri said nine civilians, one soldier and one policemen, along with the two militants, had been killed in the raids on the temples, while 52 people were injured.

The raid was one of a flurry of attacks since Friday in which more than 40 people died, including 12 people in a bus blown up by a landmine.

India has long accused Pakistan of sponsoring militants fighting a separatist rebellion against Indian rule in its only Muslim-majority state, a charge Islamabad denies.

The two nuclear-armed countries nearly went to war in June after a military standoff triggered by an attack on India's parliament last December, but have since begun pulling back troops that had been mobilized along their border.

The bloodshed signaled the end of any honeymoon for the state's new chief minister, Mufti Mohammad Syed, who came to power after an election in September and October toppled the family dynasty through which India traditionally ruled the state.

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani was quick to blame Syed's softer line on militancy for raids.

"The new state government is pursuing a policy which seems to be encouraging these elements," Advani told television news station Asian News International. *Reuters*

Ramadan in Cairo: Unusual, dangerous, bizarre

CAIRO—It's a time of meditation and spiritual renewal—not to mention horrific traffic, conspicuous consumption, late-night partying and a seemingly endless parade of TV melodramas.

Ramadan, the holiest month in the Muslim calendar, is a special time in Cairo, the Muslim world's most populous capital.

More than any other time of year, Ramadan—when devout Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and having sex from dawn to dusk—brings out the diversity of a city known for a rich history as well as pollution and scant services that make life a challenge for its 16 million people.

At times, the widening gap between rich and poor is highlighted by Ramadan. But the rich also reach out to the needy—albeit indirectly—in a nightly ritual known as the "mawaid el-rahman," or banquets of mercy.

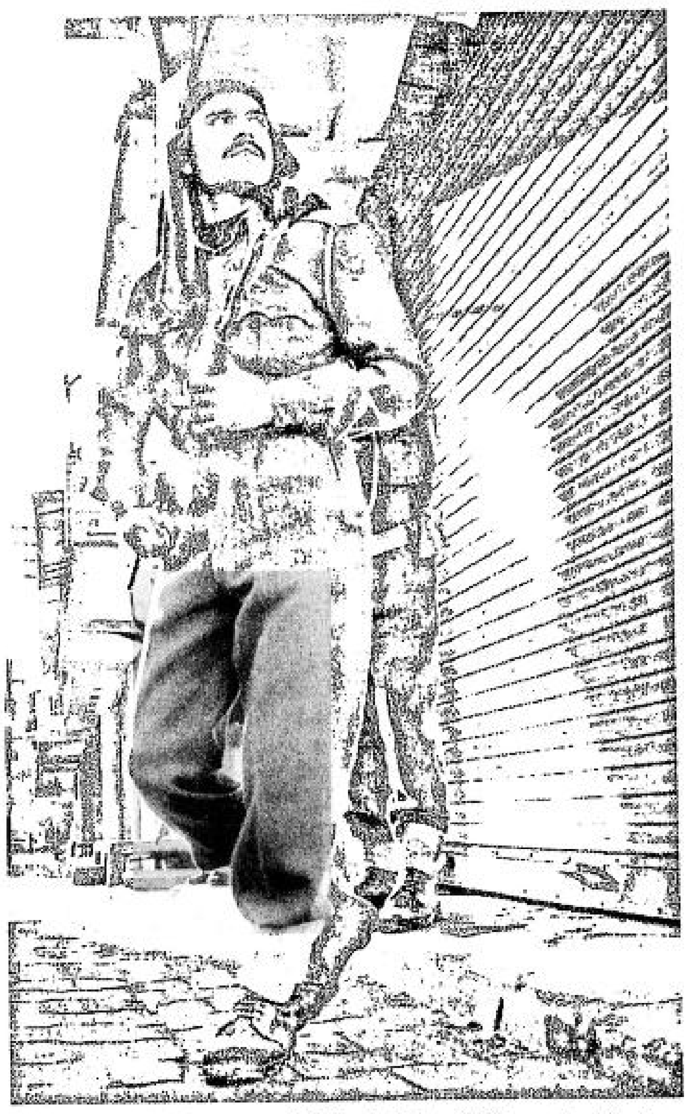
Wealthy Cairenes donate money, often anonymously, for the poor to have a free "iftar," the meal taken at sunset to break the all-day fast. Anyone can come—and thousands do—for meals served in parks, along dead-end streets or inside sprawling tents.

The wealthy have their own exclusive tents, where they enjoy sumptuous food and entertainment and smoke "sheesha," or water pipes, into the early morning.

Each year, the partying is more elaborate—and more criticized as detracting from Ramadan's spirit.

"This business about tents and sheesha takes away some of the month's sanctity," complained Sheik Mahmoud Ashoor of the Al-Azhar mosque and university. "It's a month that should be devoted to worship, a time of year when we must cleanse ourselves from the sins of 11 months."

The holiness of Ramadan arises from the belief that the first verses of the Quran, Islam's holy book, were revealed to Islam's 7th century prophet Muhammad during the month. This year's observances began Nov. 6. *AP*



A MEMBER of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) guards a Hindu temple complex where 14 people were killed in an overnight bloodbath. AFP

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FVR sings same song: Cha-cha means reforms

BAGUIO CITY—Ask former President Fidel Ramos about politics and he'll be silent.

Ramos keynoted a conference of realtors here on Saturday but he declined to talk much about politics and his political plans for 2004.

"Charter change will bring reforms to politics," he said as he shrugged off questions on whether he would run for president in 2004.

He also avoided commenting on reports about the possible candidacy of actor Fernando Poe Jr. This disappointed some members of the Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines Inc. (Rebap) who were interested in hearing the former president's thoughts on Poe's chances in the polls.

"I thought we are talking about the Rebap," Ramos said. But in his speech, he joked about government officials who are setting their sights on the 2004 elections.

"We have 24 senators in the government, and out of the 24, 23 of them want to run for president. Only one wants to vote," Ramos said, eliciting laughter from the conference participants. He did not identify these senators.

Ramos, however, praised the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo for doing a "job well done." "Good housekeeping has started to turn the economy around," he said.

Ramos cited a World Bank report that showed that a measure of political stability has been established under the Macapagal administration.

He said foreign direct investments (FDI) are also rising. Citing the United Nations World Investment Report, he noted that in 2001, the FDI entry in the Philippines increased by 50 percent over the 2000 figure.

He said much of the investments went into electronics, automotive, mining, information technology services and garments.

Ramos said the government's budget deficit is the toughest problem that Ms Macapagal faces.

He said the budget crisis has been set off by a drastic fall in the government's tax collection effort.

"There are some structural reasons for this fall in tax revenues, among them the steady reduction of Philippine tariffs in line with our country's commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Asean Free Trade Area (Afta)," he said.

Ramos also gave Ms Macapagal advice on her goal to build a "strong republic."

"Building state capacity means creating political structures strong enough to move the country toward economic, political and social modernization. These include the civil service and the political parties, both of which she (Ms Macapagal) must infuse with a stronger sense of national purpose," he said.

He said Ms Macapagal must turn the government from regulation to development to jumpstart the economy. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DILG starts probe of drugs, weapons in jail

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Department of Interior and Local Government yesterday started its investigation of the reported proliferation of illegal drugs in the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center (BBRC) and alleged abuses of some jail officials.

Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, head of the fact-finding committee, arrived in Cebu yesterday to start the inquiry.

Corpus' arrival came a day after BBRC officials confiscated on Sunday hundreds of paraphernalia used in illegal drugs and about 20 deadly weapons during a surprise inspection at the city jail.

Jail officials said they would continue to rid the jail of drugs and weapons.

Corpus met with the other members of the task force—Roberto Abejero, DILG director for Central Visayas, and two other lawyers from the DILG regional office.

The committee members were scheduled to meet with Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña and Vice Mayor Michael Rama, head of the Police Coordinating Advisory Council (PCAC) who were also conducting an inquiry into the allegations against the BBRC officials and jail guards.

Corpus, who was scheduled to leave for Manila today, said he asked Abejero to gather more information so they could finish their investigation immediately.

Local Government Secretary Jose Lina formed a fact-finding committee to look into the reported proliferation of drugs, and investigate other irregularities in the jail.

The task force would investigate the alleged special treatment accorded to "influential inmates" including cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr.

Corpus assured there would be no whitewash in the investigation.

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SUS, PWEDE NA 'TO!
O, HAYAN!
SNIFF SNIFF MAY NAAAMOY AKO!
TAKBOO!! SUMISINGAW ANG TANKE!
SSSSSSSSS
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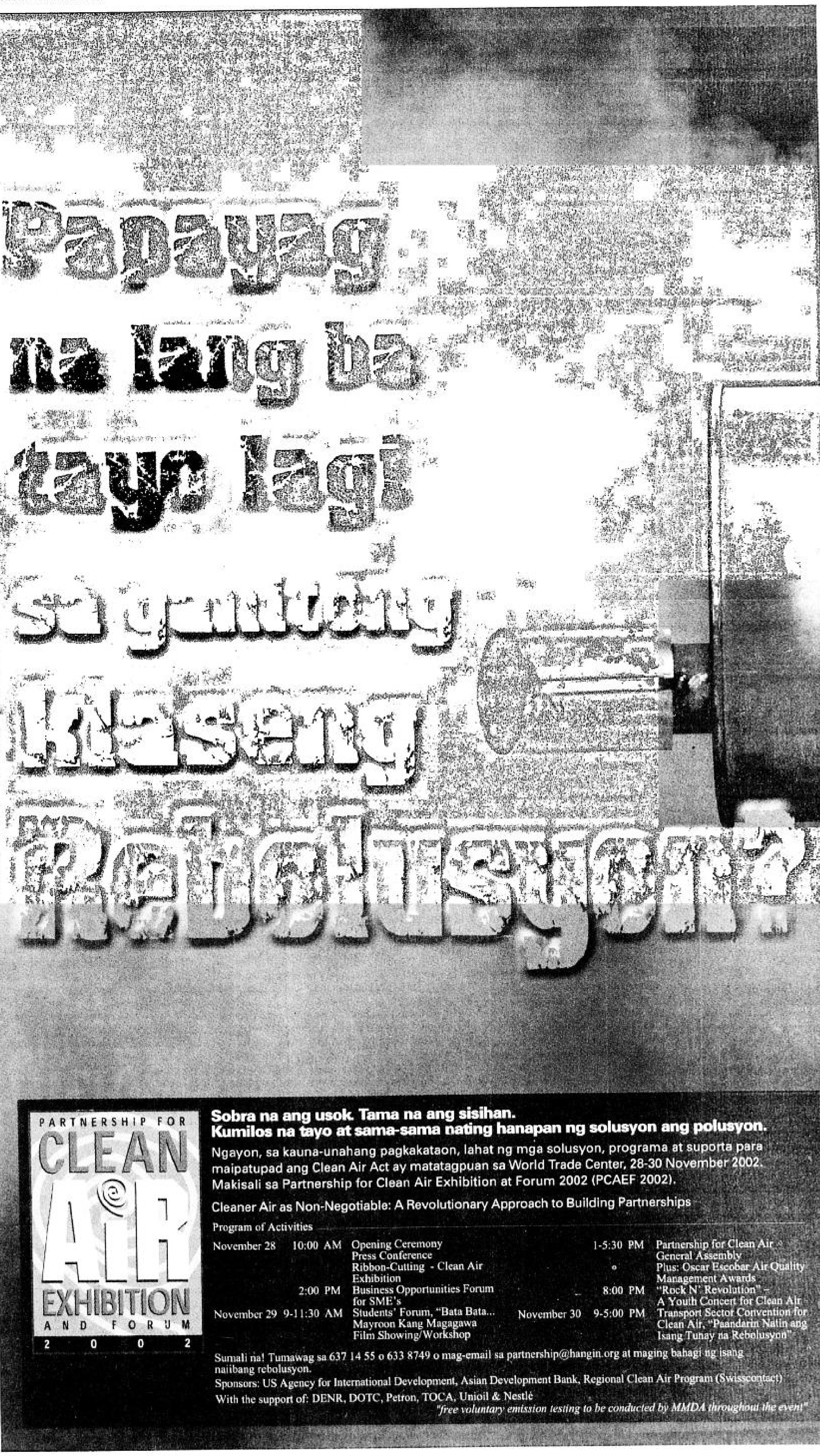
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Program of Activities

November 28	10:00 AM	Opening Ceremony Press Conference Ribbon-Cutting - Clean Air Exhibition
	2:00 PM	Business Opportunities Forum for SME's
	1-5:30 PM	Partnership for Clean Air General Assembly Plus: Oscar Escobar Air Quality Management Awards
	8:00 PM	"Rock N' Revolution" – A Youth Concert for Clean Air
November 29	9-11:30 AM	Students' Forum, "Bata Bata... Mayroon Kang Magagawa Film Showing/Workshop
November 30	9-5:00 PM	Transport Sector Convention for Clean Air, "Paandarin Natin ang Isang Tunay na Rebolusyon"

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Gunmen set free Lanao Sur gov't worker, sis

COTABATO CITY—An armed group in Lanao del Sur freed a government employee and his sister, whom they abducted in Marawi City, police said Sunday.

Chief Supt. Akmad Omar, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police chief, said Nimrod Castillon of the regional state prosecutor's office in Marawi and his sister Julie were released in Poona Piagapo town on Friday.

Omar quoted investigators as saying that a relative of the kidnappers has been facing murder charges for killing Julie's policeman-husband several months ago.

"The kidnapping was aimed at forcing Julie to drop the charges," he said belying earlier reports that the armed men wanted P1 million in ransom in exchange for the victims' freedom.

Omar said when Julie agreed to drop the charges the kidnappers brought them to Poona Piagapo, where they were set free.

"They were later freed after Julie agreed to execute an affidavit of desistance," he said.

On Thursday, the armed men, whose identities have yet to be established, snatched the siblings as they were driving to Iligan City.

4 suspects

Maj. Roberto Rada of the Army's 36th Infantry Battalion said at least four armed suspects "forcibly boarded the vehicle" and told Nimrod to continue driving.

Upon reaching Barangay Lower Payawan in Pantar, Lanao del Sur, the suspects ordered the siblings to get out of the vehicle.

They then retreated, bringing along the victims toward Barangay Dimalon in Tagoloan town, also in Lanao del Sur.

Operatives from the Balo-i police station later announced the recovery of Nimrod's vehicle but there was no sight of the victims or their keepers.

Most kidnappings in Mindanao have been attributed to the Abu Sayyaf, the Pentagon Gang and some renegades belonging to a Muslim armed faction that continues to be loyal to ousted ARMM governor Nur Misuari.

Until now, the Abu Sayyaf continues to hold hostage a group of Indonesian fishermen, and female members of the religious group Jehovah's Witnesses. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Subic police assure security

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The gun attack on the house of a Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) official here on Thursday morning could be connected to the official's work in the issuance of bidding contracts.

This was learned from SBMA police investigators who said business rivalry and personal grudge could also be the motives for the attack on the house of Ricardo Coscolluela, a member of the SBMA board.

Coscolluela was not home when the attack happened between 1 and 2 a.m. on Thursday.

Reports said a witness saw a gunman stand in front of the New West Kalayaan house of Coscolluela and fire at it.

Senior Supt. Edgardo Tinio, chief of the SBMA intelligence and investigation office, said the attack was an isolated case and added that the freeport remained peaceful and secure.

"We have beefed up our security forces to ensure the safety of residents," he said.

Coscolluela, in a phone interview Friday, said he was known at the SBMA for his strictness in procedures in issuing bidding contracts. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

"Super labor group" being formed to play key role in polls

DAVAO CITY—A "super labor group" composed of at least 10 workers' organizations is being formed here. Its objective, the organizers said, is to turn laborers into a force to reckon with especially during elections.

Lawyer Danilo Cullo, spokesperson of the Workers Council of Davao City (WCDC), said that the "super labor group" could implement the "one vote" system, which could prompt legislators to take their demands more seriously.

Cullo said they were not expecting the "super labor group" to be in the same league with the religious group Iglesia Ni Cristo in terms of members "blindly following" orders regarding candidates to vote for but they expect that majority of the workers will follow their leaders.

"If you are a worker devoted to your union, you will follow your leaders when they suggest whom to vote for," he said.

Citing a study by the WCDC, Cullo said there are about 1.2 million workers in the city. An estimated 750,000 of them belong to the labor force.

"With our number, we can even elect our own mayor because of our voting power," he said.

He said the organization of the "super labor group" or the labor council would also give them more lobbying power especially in connection with the workers' demand for across the board increase in wages for public and private sector employees nationwide.

"We hope that the across the board increase will no longer remain a dream when we can persuade legislators into approving it," he said.

Labor organizations have been demanding a P3,000 across the board increase in monthly wages for government employees and P125 across the board increase in daily wages for private workers.

Aside from becoming a force to reckon with, Cullo said the "super labor group" also aims to strengthen the city's labor force by closely coordinating with workers, especially those in the rural areas, and educating them about their rights.

He said they also plan to participate in any development agenda.

Cullo said meetings between core members have been regularly held for the drafting of policies that will be adopted by the group.

They included representatives from the National Federation of Labor (NFL), Southern Philippines Federation of Labor (SPFL), Davao City Federation of Homeowners Association, Mindanao Association of Independent Unions (MAIU), Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), Makabayan, Confederation of Independent Unions (CIU), and South Eastern Mindanao Diversified Drivers and Operators Cooperative (SEMDDOC). *Joel Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GLOBALIZATION

Benguet farmers brace for free trade war

By Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Globalization used to be an abstract concept for many Igorot folk.

But globalization's impact is now staring Benguet farmers and officials in the eyes through imported and smuggled vegetables now threatening to kill an almost century-old major industry in the province.

To drive home the point that globalization's adverse impact is real, Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas cited the latest vegetable price monitor report during a program on Thursday.

On that day he said cabbages were selling at a paltry P1.50 a kilogram; *wombok* or Chinese cabbage, P2.50 a kg; potatoes, P5; and carrots, P7.

Farmers from Benguet and neighboring Mt. Province have suffered a continuing slump in vegetable prices since July. In July alone, farmers and traders reportedly lost an estimated P3.5 million in income.

The culprit, according to Molintas, is "small-scale or large-scale vegetable importation, whether legal or illegal."

Earlier reports have said the government had allowed importation of vegetables from Australia and the United States.

This was on top of "misdeclared" *ponkan* oranges from China and Taiwan, which turned out to be carrots and other vegetables such as ginger, onions and garlic.

Although getting a beating from the impact of the deluge of imported vegetables, Benguet folk and their officials are not about to give up the vegetable industry altogether.

On the occasion of Benguet's 102nd founding anniversary, which the province has celebrated since Nov. 18, Benguet officials have come out with a daring theme: "Steering the WHEELS towards global competition."

"WHEELS" refers to water and health systems, electricity, education, livelihood and sports.

Molintas challenged Benguet folk to help innovate new approaches, if not discover and invent technologies, which could help "arm ourselves and be globally competitive."

Benguet need not look far for technological help.

Prof. Lita Molitas-Colting, one of eight awardees the province honored last Nov. 21, said the government-run Benguet State University can offer technological skills and approaches, which farmers can avail of.

The BSU, for example, can show and teach the technology on processing carrots and other vegetables through solar and electric dryers, said Colting.

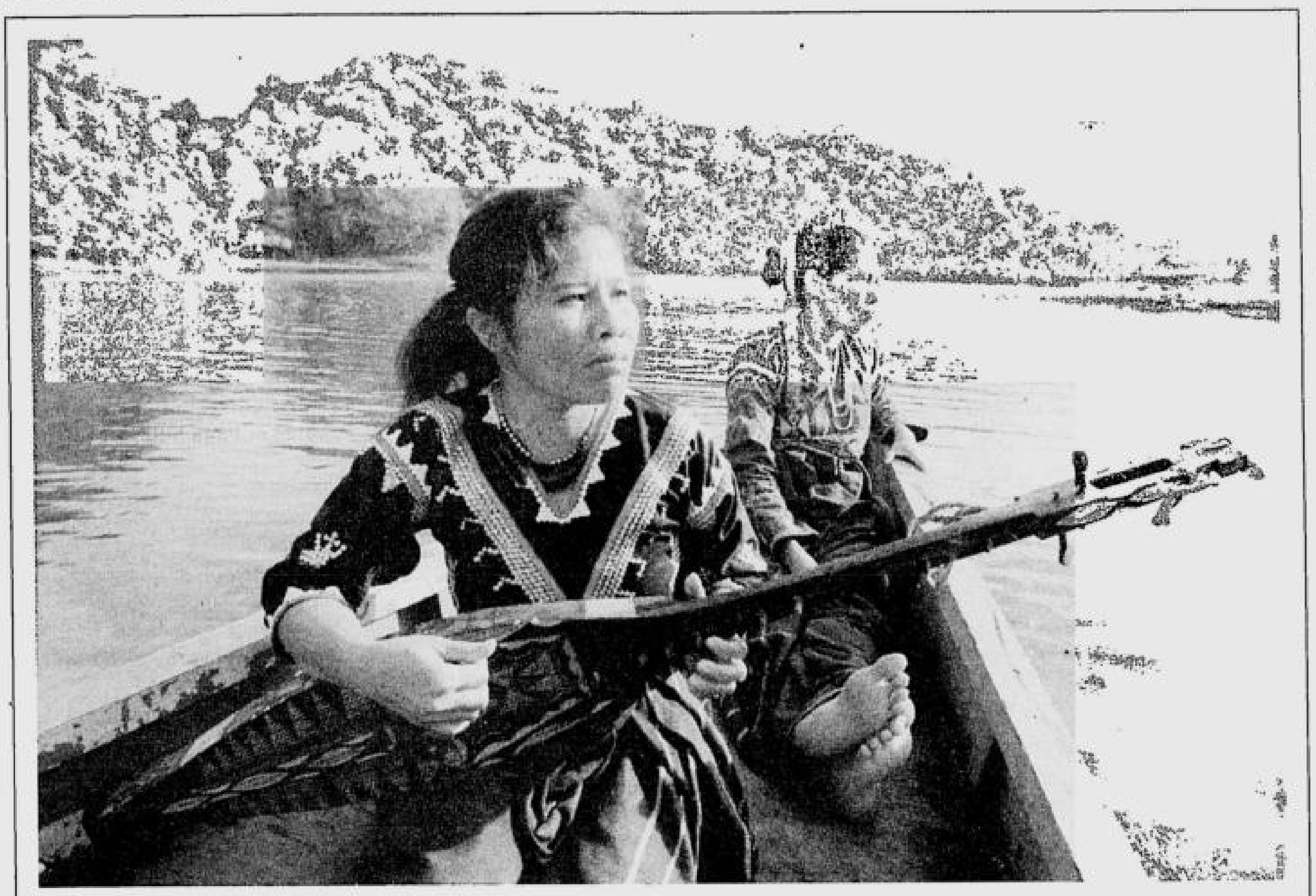
She said the BSU can teach farmers how to process carrots into wine.

"In this age of global competition, it is not enough just to produce and improve production," she said. "We must go into food processing."

Atok Mayor Concepcion Balao said she would mobilize her research staff to closely coordinate with BSU in the search for new technologies and approaches.

Farmers can access these to cope with the impact of global competition under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization, Balao said.

Earlier, Michael Bengwayan of the Project Initiating Employment Through Training in Environmental Enterprises (Pine Tree), said that in the face of falling vegetable prices, many Benguet farmers sought his help in exploring "alternative crops."



SOOTHING MUSIC ROMEO GACAD/AFP

T'boli native Elena Hayo Mon's music fills the air around Lake Sebu as she plays the *hegalong*, a two-stringed instrument. The T'bolis have been converted to Christianity during the Spanish colonial period but have managed to preserve their culture and traditions.

2 hurt in firecracker factory blast in Cebu City

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Two persons were wounded on Sunday when firecrackers exploded inside a makeshift factory in Sitio Kulo, Barangay Babag 2, Lapulapu City, Mactan Island, Cebu.

Ely Castro, 24, and a worker of the factory, suffered second degree burns and was confined at the city government-ran Don Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center (DVSMMC).

Alejandro Augusto, 41, owner of the factory, suffered minor burns in the hands and legs. He was immediately released from the Lapulapu District Hospital.

According to Castro's father, Wilfredo, the doctors said that his son was in stable condition. His son has been Augusto's seasonal worker for two years—hired every September to January for the Yuletide Season, when demand for firecrackers reaches its peak.

The explosion on Sunday was the first in Cebu since the start of hectic preparations for the Christmas season.

Emerenciana Augusto said Castro and her husband were busy working at that time in order to catch up with pending orders for firecrackers.

She said Castro was loading gunpowder into the paper shelves when it suddenly ignited, causing an explosion inside the factory made of nipa hut.

Emerenciana said she did not know why the firecrackers ignited because, she said, they had been following regulations in manufacturing firecrackers.

The hut was damaged as their neighbors managed to help put out the fire. the damage to property was estimated only at P13,000.

Emerenciana said her husband and Castro were first brought to the Lapulapu District Hospital but Castro had to be transferred to the DVSMMC due to severe burns.

She assured Castro that they would shoulder his hospital bills.

Supt. Esmael Codilla, Lapulapu City outgoing fire marshal, raised suspicion that the operation of the firecracker factory was illegal because the explosion was not reported to their office.

He said he already ordered an investigation especially since the factory was built about 30 to 50 meters away from Augusto's house when under the law, it should be constructed about 300 meters away from a residential area.

Emerenciana, for her part, said their operation was legal. She pointed out that they are one of the members of the Lapulapu Pyrotechnics Multi-purpose Cooperative.

She said they have been operating since 1986 and this was the first time that an accident took place.

Rebs urge release of political detainees for Xmas

BACOLOD CITY—Leaders of a breakaway communist faction are asking the government to release at least 40 political prisoners in the country before Christmas.

Arturo Tabara, Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas (RPM-P) chair, said it would mean a lot for the families of these political detainees if they would be home this Christmas.

Tabara said their demand was being discussed in the Technical Working Group on Civil and Political Rights of the two panels.

Based on their records, the RPM-P has 160 political prisoners in the country. He said they would appreciate it if at least 40 of these political detainees would be released before Dec. 25.

The release of the political prisoners was one of the provisions in the first phase of the peace agreement signed between the RPM-P and the government panels.

But a working committee would have to review the cases first before the political prisoners would be freed. The committee would have to determine if the nature of the offenses was in pursuit of their ideology and not common crimes.

In 2000, five political detainees locked up at the Negros Occidental provincial jail were released upon the initial signing of a peace agreement in Don Salvador Benedicto town by the RPM-P and the government.

Last month, both parties agreed to "refrain from committing acts of aggression and/or antagonism . . ."

The Joint Enforcement Monitoring Committee (JEMC) would also formulate mechanics in the release of P10 million in "reintegration funds" for RPA-ABB members and on how to deal with political prisoners.

The five-man JEMC is chaired by presidential adviser Teresita Quintos-Deles. The members are Undersecretary Victor Mayo, deputy director general of the National Security Council; Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade national commander Stephen Paduano, also known as Carapali Lualhati, and Veronica Tabara of the RPM-P.

The fifth member of the committee is Bishop Emeritus Hilario Gomez Jr. of the United Church of Christ of the Philippines, who is the JEMC vice chair.

The RPM-P and its armed wing, the RPA-ABB, broke away from the mainstream Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army in the early 1990s over political and ideological differences. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Gadgets get heat for power theft

By Alex V. Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—They go around in groups of two or three, usually on motorcycles. They sell to unsuspecting homeowners a simple contraption with wires sticking out of it.

At first glance, these gadgets, called "power savers," look crude, even for the untrained eye.

But homeowners are lured into buying them for P2,500 apiece after they are assured that these gadgets will reduce one's electric consumption by as much as 100 percent. Even businesses fall for these by buying them for P12,000.

"Power Savers" come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have one thing in common—they don't save, but rather, steal electricity.

They do save the homeowner huge amounts, though.

Unsuspecting consumers admitted that the people who sold them the gadgets opened their electric meters "to clean them."

What they didn't know was these electricians actually installed jumpers in their meters, allowing them to use electricity without being charged.

So far, the Negros Oriental Electric Cooperative (Noreco 2) caught 60 consumers who all claimed they had no intention of stealing power from the electric cooperative.

"They're really innocent," said Derek Erames, head of the Noreco 2 anti-pilferage task force.

The Noreco 2 was alarmed after its system's loss increased in August from 14 percent to a staggering 17 percent. This prompted the Noreco 2 board to form teams to check on the electrical connections.

"We automatically become suspicious once we see a sudden drop in one's electrical consumption," said Ephraim Taclob, Noreco 2 general manager.

To minimize chances of getting caught, the makers of these devices put a switch and ask their unsuspecting customers to periodically put these on or off.

The sale of these power-savers surged in the last few months. The Noreco 2 officials estimated there could be no less than 1,000 such units in circulation.

But as soon as word spread that the anti-pilferage teams were making up to four disconnections each day, others voluntarily removed their connections.

"They must have heard that once we find out about their power savers, we will charge them the highest monthly bill possible," Taclob said.

Taclob said that after two months of going after these power saving gadgets, their systems loss has gone down to 15.4 percent.

GMA expected to ask Nani to go on leave

From page A1

Jimenez's charges from a Supreme Court justice, through whom the dossier was submitted.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said the plan was for Perez to take a leave for about a month, during which time his accusers would then be given all the chance to substantiate their charges.

The President said she had no plans to announce a Cabinet revamp on Nov. 30, since changes had already been under way with some Cabinet resignations, but indicated that Perez's leave could be a dramatic move with strong political impact, one that could signal her determination to address the corruption and governance issues hurled at her administration.

Yesterday, however, Perez said he was seriously considering going on a leave of absence because of ulcer problems and "(probably) to pursue (my case) against Jimenez privately."

Perez said he would study the transcript of the privilege speech and then discuss with the President his next course of action. He is scheduled to meet the President today.

In a hastily called news conference at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, where he had just arrived from Bangkok, Perez tried to summarize the issue in one sound bite.

"He said that I asked money from him. For what? He must be dreaming."

Senate consensus

Visibly stressed from travel, Perez said that Jimenez's accusations were those of a desperate man since the Supreme Court would soon issue a ruling that would hasten the congressman's extradition.

In the Senate, the head of the administration coalition asked Perez to go on leave.

"I would strongly advise Secretary Perez to go on leave because he has to clear himself, and while this matter is pending, he could no longer be effective," Senate President Franklin Drilon said.

Drilon said both Perez and Jimenez could be charged with bribery. "But the statement of Congressman Jimenez is that he was blackmailed and there was extortion, and therefore he gave his money under duress and against his will," Drilon said.

"I expect that to be his defense against this possibility of his being charged under the laws of bribery," he explained.

Drilon said that the burden is also with Jimenez to prove that the amount was given involuntarily.

Drilon also said that any investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation on the matter would not be credible if Perez was still the secretary of justice.

In case Perez goes on leave, the Administrative Code provides that an undersecretary will be the acting secretary.

Minority Leader Vicente Sotto joined in Drilon's suggestion.

Sotto said Perez should allow a full-blown investigation, whether in Congress or another venue.

"For all you know, there might be other personalities involved," he said.

But opposition Sen. John Osmeña said there was no reason for Perez to continue clinging to his post.

"Perez is so thick-faced he won't resign," he said in Filipino.

"He's not being asked to commit *hara-kiri*, only to resign. He is incredibly thick-faced."

Sotto said it was the sense of the minority that the resolution filed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson seeking an investigation on this matter should be investigated by the Senate even if Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the blue ribbon committee, refused to do so.

Drilon said he would refer the matter to the bicameral Congressional Oversight Committee on Money Laundering, which is headed by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay in the Senate and Rep. Jaime Lopez in the House.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said the Jimenez exposé would lead to the collapse of the Macapagal administration.

"I think the unraveling of the Macapagal administration has now begun," Pimentel said.

"This is the first time that a person is actually saying that a member of the Cabinet of the President has received an amount of money which can implicate other members of the official family of the President, and probably even the unofficial, depending on the way the evidence will be developed," he added.

Even before Jimenez's speech, former Justice Secretary and ex-Supreme Court Justice Serafin Cuevas advised Perez over the radio to go on leave.

Curiously, it was the operations center of the Office of the Press Secretary that released the transcript of Cuevas' radio interview.

Perez briefing

In his briefing, Perez said he had prosecuted the extradition case against Jimenez without letup.

"Do I look like someone who just received $2 million? He must've been the one (who) asked money from others and told them that he would give it to me," Perez said.

He said some private lawyers would be looking for a legal exception to a congressman's parliamentary immunity and "make him criminally liable" for his allegedly baseless accusations.

"I would also include (Bulacan) Congressman (Willie) Villarama in the case," Perez said.

"Anytime today, the Supreme Court would issue a ruling that would hasten his extradition to the United States. This is the reason why he is trying to make us cower," Perez told reporters.

Perez admitted that he met with Jimenez at the congressman's residence to discuss the latter's request for protection in exchange for his testimony against former President Joseph Estrada in his plunder trial.

"I made it clear to him that even if he testified against former President Estrada, his extradition treaty could only be delayed. Once the trial is over, the extradition would push through," Perez said.

Perez said that he was with Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño when Jimenez asked them to come to his residence to discuss his testimony against Estrada.

"He said he could not leave the house because he was afraid of Jinggoy (Estrada, the former President's son and mayor of San Juan)," Perez said.

Perez said that Jimenez presented him with a stack of checks that would have proved that he gave money to Estrada—about 27 in all, he later recalled in a TV interview.

"He later wavered and said that he could only testify on some checks. I told him that he is not the justice secretary and he (is not in a position to) choose which checks he could testify on," Perez said.

Perez said he gave Jimenez a deadline.

"Subsequent events would show . . . (that he) executed an affidavit that could not convict anyone," Perez said. *With reports from Cynthia Balana, Michael Lim Ubac, Dona Pazzibugan, Carlito Pablo*

PEREZ, just arrived from Bangkok, Thailand, walks to the hastily organized press conference he called to refute Jimenez's allegations.

ROGER MARGALLO

Ballooning deficit prompts cut in RP credit rating

From page A1

duced by the economy, including consumption, government purchases, investments and exports minus imports—when it hit P187.6 billion as of Oct. 31. It was the third time this year the target had been missed.

The government said its deficit this year was likely to reach 5.6 percent of GDP, or about P223 billion. The 2003 goal was set at 4.7 percent of GDP, or around P202 billion.

Unmanageable deficit

Fitch's decision came a month after US-based Standard & Poor's cut its own BB-plus outlook for the Philippines from stable to negative. Only Moody's Investors Service retained a stable outlook for the Philippines.

The growing budget deficit has been raising serious concerns in Congress, which is currently deliberating on the proposed P804.2-billion budget for 2003.

One senior member of the House of Representatives has conceded that the situation may have become "unmanageable".

Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr., chair of the House appropriations committee, said with the budget deficit expected to swell to P223 billion by year's end and the peso falling to new lows, Congress should "accept the reality that we are now in a state of a de facto or undeclared unmanageable national government deficit."

Andaya said his committee had already ditched the government's "rosy and rainbow-colored forecast of high tax collections and a low budget deficit" next year.

Deeper in debt

The government rushed to reassure investors that fiscal discipline and related reforms remained a priority.

"We all know that this is a tough nut to crack, but our persistence and determination will pay off in the medium term as we work toward more sustainable growth in the country's tax collection base," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the revised outlook of both Fitch and Standard & Poor's should serve as a wake-up call and should compel the government to reverse its chronic deficit problem by striving to improve revenue collection.

Economists, however, are unanimous in expecting little improvement in cracking down on tax evasion or widening the tax base ahead of the 2004 elections. This, they warn, may bury the country deeper in debt.

"There's less enthusiasm to push for this now because the attitude of the parties is not to hurt anybody at this point, not to displease potential donors and supporters," said Mario Lamberte, president of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

Fitch said with the government's shrinking tax take, the national government's debt against GDP could exceed 70 percent by year's end from 63 percent last year and 51 percent in 1996. Including the central bank's debt, the debt-to-GDP ratio could even hit as high as 80 percent.

True debt picture

At least one lawmaker believes the government is not telling the true debt picture.

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said the national government's actual debt as of September this year was not P2.715 trillion as reported but P3.26 trillion.

He said the P2.715 trillion represented borrowings by national government agencies only and excluded an accurate computation of the "relent, guaranteed and contingent" debt.

According to Recto, the country's contingent debt stood at P545 billion, bringing the real debt figure closer to P3.26 trillion.

Contingent debt includes government guarantees on loans for infrastructure projects and of government.

"As guarantor of said loans, the government assumes the obligations should the 'principal obligator' default on payments," he said.

Recto also disclosed that the P3.26 trillion worth of debt was only a portion of the gargantuan public sector debt, which stood at P4.81 trillion as of last December, the last time government made an official disclosure on the matter.

"It is now time for the government to reveal how much the public sector debt is. Has it grown to P5 trillion? I believe it has," he said. *With reports from Reuters, AFP and AP*

DepEd fears exodus of good teachers

From page A1

area from the private sector, he said, citing as an example the Metrobank Foundation's annual search for outstanding teachers.

Winners are given cash awards, and their schools get faculty development grants.

The search is open to all Filipino full-time teachers in the elementary, high school and college levels who have been teaching in the Philippines for the last 10 years.

NPA rebs ambush, kill 4 soldiers in Mindoro

From page A1

Calzado said Palparan and 29 soldiers on board a Nissan Patrol vehicle and an M-35 truck were ambushed as they were negotiating a winding road near Tamaraw Falls in Barangay Villaflor.

About 50 NPA rebels opened fire on the convoy, sparking a two-hour gunbattle. Troops of the 16th Infantry Battalion rushed to scene but they were met with a hail of gunfire from another NPA group.

The reinforcing troops were able to link up with the besieged soldiers and rescue them. Palparan and the eight other wounded soldiers were brought to the Calapan Provincial Hospital. Palparan was later flown to the V. Luna Hospital in Quezon City while the rest of the wounded were airlifted to different hospitals in San Teodoro and Calapan City.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal congratulated the NPA Melito Glor and the Lucio de Guzman Commands for the "successful ambush." The Lucio de Guzman Command operates on Mindoro island, while the Melito Glor Command operates in Southern Tagalog.

"We also encourage all New People's Army commands nationwide to launch similar offensives against the enemy," Rosal said in a text message coursed through a CPP media liaison officer to the INQUIRER in Lucena City.

Maj. Gen. Roy Kyamko, chief of the Southern Command, played down the NPA victory.

"That's the way it is. Sometimes, you win; sometimes, you lose," Kyamko said. "But it does not necessarily mean that they now have the upper hand. We will go after them and pursuit these terrorists relentlessly."

Kyamko said Palaparan and his men were on a peace mission "when these bunch terrorists seized the opportunity."

Palparan said the NPA "did not want to lose the rich extortion minefield from several ritzy tourist resorts in the area. So they are fighting like hell."

Palparan said the wounds he suffered were only superficial. "I'll be back soon and continue my work of peace for the people," he told the INQUIRER. *With reports from Martin P. Marfil, AP, AFP and Reuters*

PROTEST AT PTA

Philippine Tourism Authority employees have been holding rallies both in support of and against PTA General Manager Nixon Kua, who has been axed by Malacañang. Kua blames politics for his ouster, saying he has not been charged with any offense nor did he resign. His replacement is former Makati City Councilor Robert Dean Barbers, son of Sen. Robert Barbers.

ERIK ARAZAS

Jimenez accuses Perez of extorting $2M

From page A1

was fronting for Perez.

"I accuse, I accuse, I accuse Secretary Hernando Perez of destroying my family, the spirit, dignity and integrity of my family which is (worth) more than a billion dollars," Jimenez said. His speech preempted the plenary deliberations of the 2003 national budget.

"But secondary to that, I'm confirming that he is an extortionist, that he extorted $2 million from your colleague, Congressman Mark Jimenez," he said.

His wife Carol and son Marcel Crespo were in the House gallery when he delivered his speech, titled "The MJ Odyssey: Why Nani Perez wants to eliminate me."

Touchy interpellation

But Jimenez was touchy when his colleagues interpellated him to ask for details of the extortion. At one point, he asked House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla if he was lawyering for Perez.

"What I'm telling you about is my life. How my family was tormented. And it's my money, not yours. My family is now (the) living dead," he said.

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales, who was presiding, thrice asked the House secretary to strike off Jimenez's unparliamentary remarks.

Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Raul Gonzalez, who took over the session close to noon, told off Jimenez. He said Jimenez should not tell his colleagues what questions to ask him.

Gonzalez insisted on ending Jimenez's time but he was outvoted by congressmen who said Jimenez should be given more time to answer questions.

Jimenez ended up being interpellated for one and a half hours.

The controversial congressman is the subject of an extradition campaign by the United States for alleged illegal campaign contributions and tax evasion

Manila Times

Villarama, who was president of the Manila Times when it was owned by Jimenez, escorted his former employer when he arrived in the session hall shortly before the session opened at 10 a.m. Villarama stayed by his side throughout.

Jimenez said he would file charges against Perez with the Ombudsman shortly after delivering his privilege speech, including defamation and a possible P100-million plunder case corresponding to the $2 million.

He said he would submit the bank account and other evidence of extortion to the Ombudsman, and emphasized that he was waiving bank secrecy to prove the extortion.

He challenged Perez to exercise the same waiver for the Coutts Bank account.

Jimenez did not specify the bank accounts, but Villarama had earlier identified Account No. HO 13706 as the account in Coutts Bank which received the $2 million.

Jimenez also said that after his speech, his wife would go to President Macapagal-Arroyo to ask for Perez's resignation.

"She will go to Malacañang to ask the President—anyway they are friends—for the resignation of Secretary Perez, not because of the $2 million because that is loose change compared to what he did to my family and what he can do to other families," he said.

Jimenez said he gave in to the extortion "for my own reason" and the safety and peace of his family.

MJ's house

Under interpellation, Jimenez said the extortion happened in his house sometime the third week of January.

"In my house. He (was) in my house every other day with Escaler," he said. "Nani Perez was in my house nine to ten times. Escaler also."

"It happened when I was being asked to testify against former President Estrada. He (Perez) wanted something else which was so difficult because I did not want to snitch on others," he said.

Jimenez had earlier told the INQUIRER that Perez wanted him to execute affidavits against Estrada cronies which would be used against them if they would not support Ms Macapagal in 2004.

He said Perez cursed and threatened him in front of his wife and two sons.

"He told me before he left (my house), that there would be a communication to me (on where to send the money)," Jimenez said.

He said it was on Feb. 13 when he received by fax the bank account number in Coutts Bank from Escaler. He said he would present this faxed document which includes Escaler's name and number.

Jimenez said that upon receiving the instruction from Escaler, he called up his lawyer and contacted his bank in the Cayman Islands.

When Padilla asked if he confirmed that the money was transferred and received, he said yes. He said that whenever dollars were involved, an "advising bank" in the United States would always make the confirmation: In this case, he said, it was the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

Other points

- Jimenez belied Perez's statement in the INQUIRER that Escaler was his (Jimenez's) friend and not his.
- He detailed a "road map" of what he claimed was Perez's single-minded persecution of him.
- He said the last nail in the coffin was in October when Perez presented his detention cell to media, which he said traumatized his younger children.

Villarama said he felt vindicated by Jimenez's coming out. "It has to come from him," Villarama said, explaining why he did not name Perez earlier.

Villarama is a distant relative of Escaler.

In the Senate, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who disclosed the million-dollar bribery last year, said he felt vindicated too. "I told you so," he said.

But Lacson said what Villarama and Jimenez referred to was the Impsa contract which was signed by President Macapagal after Perez had given a favorable legal opinion on this matter. *With a report from Cynthia Balana*

IT ALL started in his Forbes Park mansion, according to Jimenez.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

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Did you know? *Effective August 1, 2002, Mabuhay Miles replaces both PALsmiles and Mabuhay Club as Philippine Airlines' integrated frequent flyer program. Existing members will be transferred to their corresponding membership levels (Elite, Premier Elite or Million Miler) and receive new membership cards by mail.*

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SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ● Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

IOC members bat for baseball, softball

COLORADO SPRINGS–IOC members attending a conference this weekend were confident the group will keep three sports targeted for elimination from the Olympics. The International Olympic Committee is scheduled to discuss dropping baseball, softball and modern pentathlon this week during a meeting in Mexico City.

PROGRESSIVE TIE-BREAK

Paragua finishes 5th in World Youth Chess 2002

PARAGUA

FILIPINO Mark Paragua could only draw his final round game against eventual champion GM Ferenc Berkes of Hungary and settled for fifth place in the boys' under-18 of the World Youth Chess Championships 2002 in Heraklio, Crete, Greece.

Paragua actually figured in a three-way tie for third with eight points, the same score posted by Indian GM Pentala Harikrisna and Armenian Tigran Petrosyan, but slipped to fifth after the tie-break (Progressive Scores) was applied.

Harikrisna, who was beaten by Paragua in the ninth round, emerged with 51.5 points, Petrosyan 50,5 and Paragua 49.5.

Berkes wound up tied with Azerbaijan IM Shariyaz Mamedyorov at 9 points, but got the gold medal with a higher tiebreak of 57. Mamedyorov, who won his 11th round assignment, has 53.5.

Paragua's impressive performance in the tournament, coupled with his good result in the Bled Chess Olympiad might catapult his Elo rating beyond the 2500 barrier, according to delegation head engineer Joseph Dumuk.

Paragua, NM Joseph Sanchez and his father, Ric Paragua, will proceed to Italy for the Genova International Open slated Nov. 25-Dec. 1.

"His feat shows that the young breed of Filipino players can be at par with the world's best. After whipping Chinese and Indian bets, Mark's the best junior chesser of Asia," said National Chess Federation of the Philippines secretary general lawyer Sammy Estimo.

National Master Roderick Nava of Carmona, Cavite, defeated Jose Cabrejos Tovas of Peru to close his campaign in the same division with 5.5 points, ranking 43rd out of 89 participants.

Manila's Aices Salvador also won his last game at the expense of Brazil's Vanessa Feliciano to raise his total to 6 points, good for 37th place among 88 entries.

Cheradee Chardine Camacho, 8-year-old sensation from La Union, bested Marta Klemencio of Croatia to climb to 4.5 points in the girls' 10-under.

Loren Brigham Laceste of La Union, University of the East's Nelson Mariano III and Pasay's Vic Neil Villanueva suffered 11th round losses and finished with 5.5 points each in their respective divisions. *Roy Luarca*

Mayor ahead

DENTIST Jenny Mayor maintained his lead in the grand prix standings of the Success section, while Cyrus Atienza regained the top spot in the Prosperity section going into the sixth leg of the 2002 Philippine Executive Active Chess Express or Peace 2002 on Nov. 30 at the Land Bank Plaza in Malate, Manila.

Peace 2002 is open to business executives and professionals. It is being organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia (ACCA) in cooperation with Land Bank and Belgosa Media Systems. Those interested to join PEACE 2002 may contact the ACCA at tel. nos. 892-8759.

Pizarro putting winner

CLUB president Danny Pizarro and 11-year-old Internationalist Jobim Carlos led the 10 division winners who gained finals tickets in the third eliminations leg of the Samsung Putting Challenge recently at the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

Carlos upstaged the older participants with the low score of 14 putts as one of the two junior division winners while Pizarro had 18 that gave him one of the seniors slots in the weekend competitions at Riviera's practice green.

Gene Bondoc matched the 14 strokes of Carlos to be among the four men's division qualifiers that also included Bobby Celestino (15), Jason Gironella (17) and Lee Myeong Yong (18). Also clinching slots were senior player John Camping (16), jungolfer Lee Ho In (15) and ladies Carmelette Villaroman (16) and Juvy Matsumoto (19).

The three-in-one event dubbed as the Samsung DigitAll Golf Challenge is also sponsored by TaylorMade adidas, Gatorade, Maxfli, Fila, Custom Clubmakers, Hotshots Flame-Grilled Burgers. Wave 89.1, City Lite 88.3, 103.5 K-Lite, Magic 89.9, KillerBee and 99.5RT are radio partners.

World jungolf champion Dottie Ardina, already a finalist, returned to get a step closer to win a brand new car and got it by scoring a hole-in-one.

Also scoring aces like the 8-year-old Ardina were Raymond Sangil, Chester Calpotura, Marites Martinez, Bondoc and Villaroman. They will join those who had earlier qualified from the previous two legs in Aguinaldo and Canlubang and the remaining legs in the finals where a hole-in-one will give them a car as a prize for a hole-in-one.

BUSTAMANTE: More titles in sight.

PDI PHOTO

Django snares All-Japan title

FRANCISCO "Django" Bustamante won the 35th All-Japan Championship Sunday for his second straight international pool title in that country in two weeks.

Bustamante defeated Mika Immonen, 11-8, in the finals after Immonen beat Efren "Bata" Reyes in a thrilling semifinals match.

Django's victory in Osaka came two weeks after he whipped International Player of the Year Ralf Souquet of Germany in the IBC 9-ball championship in Tokyo.

The only major championships that the Reyes-Bustamante duo failed to win during their latest campaign abroad were the World Pool Masters in England where Reyes placed second after losing to Souquet in the finals, and the US Open in Virginia which the two skipped to play in the Asian Games in Korea.

Reyes successfully defended the World Pool League in Poland last October. In all, the tw Filipino champions bagged 4 of 5 internation al major tournaments they took part in.

In the All-Japan Championship, Busta mante scored an epic 11-10 win over Chinese Taipei's Lu Hui-chan in the quarterfinals and then overcame young Charlie "The Dragon Williams in the semifinals, 11-9, to set up th showdown with Immonen. Although he los to Bustamante in the finals, Immonen be lieves he has turned things around with hi pulsating semifinals victory over Reyes Tokyo which made up for his nerve-wracking one rack playoff loss to "The Magician" in the winner-take-all $50,000 "Challenge of Cham pions" some months ago in Connecticut.

The Philippine billiard champions face Ea Strickland and Mika Immonen in the $37 500 LG Flatron Billiards Challenge II at Cas no Filipino, Paranaque, Nov. 28-30.

First Gentleman leads 'heart golf'

THE COUNTRY'S leading heart specialists headline the cast in the Philippine Heart Association 50th Anniversary golf tournament slated tomorrow at the Malarayat Golf and Country Club in Lipa City.

Drs. Homobono Calleja, Edgardo Ortiz and Romeo Santos, top officials of the PHA, which is celebrating its golden anniversary, said that proceeds of the event will go to the association's medical education, research and mass information campaign to fight cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of mortality in the country today.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, honorary chair, DOTC chief Leandro Mendoza and officials of the country's association of cardiologists will tee off at 7 a.m.

The golfest is part of the PHA's commitment to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Another project in its calendar is the Lakad Puso.

"This project is worthy of the support of everyone since it is one way when individuals and corporations can help fight cardiovascular disease," Mendoza said.

President Arroyo has already declared year 2002 as Year of the Heart and the period 2002 to 2012 "Decade of Cardiology," during the tenure of Dr. Ortiz as PHA president.

Bartolome tops truck challenge

NOEL Bartolome Sr. of Team Delo ruled the Tough Truck Challenge 2002 while Tom Gempesaw of 4Wheelers Davao was named Rider (Off-Roader) of the Year at The Fort Global City on Sunday.

Bartolome clocked 5:06.02 to edge Orly Infante of San Jose City Off-Roaders and win the 4th and final leg of the event, which is also known as the Caltex Delo 4x4 Extreme Challenge.

With a strong performance in the Time-C category, where he clocked 2:41:21, Bartolome bested 19 other riders in the event, co-presented by Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., Goodyear Philippines and Tide, with 199 Off-Road house and Tide/Campershells as gold sponsors.

Infante managed to complete the course in the Time-C category at 2:57.81 for a 5:35.99 total as he beat Tide-Cagayan De Oro's Agustin Macmang for second place. Macmang settled for third with a time of 5:37.61

Other major sponsors of the three-day event are 103.5 K-Lite, RX 93.1, Auto Review, Sulpicio Lines, Denso, Bilstein and Motolite, with Mother's Wax, 4x4 Magazine, Downey Off-Road Mfg. Phils, Pro Comp, Calmini Manufacturing, Warn, Hella-Phils., Inc. and Powerbikes as the minor sponsors.

Despite his fourth-place finish, Gempesaw was later named "Rider of the Year" by the organizing National Associations of Filipino Off-Roaders (NAsFOR) headed by its president Ramon To-ong, due to his consistent performance in the three previous legs.

Tide-CDO was declared overall team champion in this off-road event, hosted by the Manila Off-Road, Inc. (MORI).

La Salle Greehills takes opening day honors

LA SALLE Greenhills took the opening day honors on Sunday in the 2002 PJGP Inter-School Junior Golf Championship at the Tagaytay Highlands.

Kevin Lachica piled 54 points under the Molave System of scoring to lead the La Salle Greenhills scorers. Merwin Mediana scored 50 points and Ian Intal contributed 43 points for a total of 147 points against the 135 of La Salle Zobel behind the 47 of Justin Tambunting, 46 of Miko Alejandrino and 42 of Roman Salvador.

Lachica, with his 54 points, also leads in the individual race while teammate Merwin Mediana and St. Stephen's Jenz Tecson are tied in second spot with 50 points apiece.

In the girls high school team event, OB Montessori flaunted its awesome firepower early with multi-titled Jayvie Agojo leading the charge with her 45 points followed by Xandrea Dizon (40) and Jeizelle Pajara (19) for a 104 total.

"The kids are showing the stuff future golfstars are made of and were very excited about it. We expect more noteworthy facts in the coming days of this junior tourney which is a lifetime commitment on our part," said Philippine Junior Golf Federation president Edgardo "Tito Boy" Cantada.

Also seeing action here are the promising junior golfers from Colegio San Agustin Southville International School, Ann Arbor Montessori, Brent School and St. Benedict College.

Karting Nov. 30

TOP karters face the moment of truth as the 2002 Shell Super Karting Series stages its championship round, this weekend, Nov. 30-Dec. 1 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines. Edgesports teammates Ryan Francisco and Jeremy Marquez are headed for a neck-to-neck collision as they dispute the Intercon-A crown of this event sponsored by Pilipinas Shell, WG&A Super Ferry, Bridgestone, Nokia, Zip-Zip, ZED and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office through Chairman Livia "Honeygirl" de Leon and general manager Angelo Ver.

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Cezar takes over as Cheeseballs coach

CEZAR

GAMES THURSDAY *(Makati Coliseum)*
3 p.m.--Welcoat vs Sunkist
5 p.m.-- Montaña vs ICTSI

By Dennis U. Eroa

Philip Cezar, named one of the greatest 25 PBA players of all time, will take over as new coach of Cheeseballs-Shark, whose fortunes have turned from bad to worse in the ongoing PBL Challenge Cup.

Now 50, Cezar, who quit the PBA in 1992, guided the San Juan Knights to the MBA national championship two years ago.

"I didn't hesitate to take the job because basketball is closest to my heart," said Cezar, who became popular with his shot-blocking skills, earning him the tag "Tapal King" while playing for the legendary Crispa Redmanizers.

Also a long-time San Juan vice-mayor, Cezar will attend today's Cheeseballs-Shark practice at the Meralco Gym in Pasig City.

"My knowledge regarding the team is very limited. I hope to know my players and staff very well," said Cezar.

Despite an impressive lineup, the Cheeseballs are already relegated in the losers' bracket with a woeful 1-5 win-loss card. Only one team from the losers' bracket will have the chance to advance into the semifinals.

Co-team owner Raul Panlilio told the Inquirer that former head coach Jing Ruiz will stay as assistant. Dayong Mendoza will also remain as Cezar's deputy, same with another Crispa stalwart and Pasig City councilor Atoy Co.

Over at the Pasig Sports Center, Welcoat scored a 78-66 win over ICTSI-La Salle.

Eddie Laure and Jean Pingres bannered the Paintmasters' assault against the Archers, who failed to sustain a blazing rally in the fourth period.

Welcoat, Blu and LBC share the lead with similar 4-1 cards. Dazz beat Montaña, 80-73, in the second game.

Montaña dropped to 4-2, while Dazz improved to 2-3.

WELCOAT 78-Adducul 15, Laure 14, Pingris 14, Tubid 12, Capus 10, Artadi 9, Orfrecio 2, Cuan 2, Malonzo 0, Isip 0.

ICTSI 66--Cardona 16, Sta. Maria 9, Hugnatan 8, Dacia 8, Franco 8, Aldeguer 7, Yap 7, Johnson 3, Sharma 0, Yao 0, Uy 0, Manalo 0.

Quarters: 23-24, 47-35, 63-55, 78-66

Barbers' bone

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

ARE there fake Fil-Am basketball players in the land?

Let's say there are, who do we pin the blame on, Commissioner Jun Bernardino of the Philippine Basketball Association? Or the PBA board of governors?

None of the above.

The league was emphatic from the very start: For as long as one claiming to be a Fil-Am gets cleared by the Department of Justice as a Fil-Am, he is eligible to play in the PBA. Thus, all Fil-Ams playing in the PBA now cannot be assumed to have passed the grade; they got DOJ clearance to play that's why they are there. Many of them have been there for months. For years even.

What boggles the mind is, why has Senator Barbers suddenly shown interest in our Fil-Am cagers as to instigate an investigation of alleged fake Fil-Ams? He's doing that upon the proddings of Jojo Lastimosa and Jojo's fellow PBA unionists?

If so, I can't believe that or I'd accuse Barbers of too gullible a fellow.

For, unless Jolas & Co. have the unassailable proof to drive home their point, Barbers would be a fool to fall for it. In fact, just for Barbers to entertain the thought of holding an investigation is quite a monumental act already, if not stunning. For, in truth and in fact, what Barbers would be trying to investigate–if he pursues his "crusade"–are not the Fil-Ams, not Commissioner Bernardino, not the PBA board of governors but the Department of Justice itself.

What would be Barbers' bone of contention?

I guess I'm not singing a new tune here. In no uncertain terms that Bernardino has said it a thousand times: The PBA accepts only Fil-Ams cleared by the DoJ.

Further, is Barbers not investigating the Philippine government, which sent Fil-Ams to the just-concluded Asian Games with valid RP passports?

I can't say that with today's scheduled probe of alleged fake Fil-Ams, the good senator is doing some grandstanding, for certainly that is not his nature.

So, what then is the big deal, Sir?

Yao 'slump' versus Clippers

LOS ANGELES–Houston's Chinese rookie Yao Ming couldn't duplicate his star performance of a week earlier as the Los Angeles Clippers defeated the Rockets, 90-89, Sunday.

The Clippers used Michael Olowokandi, Wang Zhizhi and Sean Rooks to hold the 2.23-meter Yao to four points and seven rebounds in 28 minutes.

"I thought everybody did a good job," Los Angeles coach Alvin Gentry said of his team's defense against Yao, the No. 1 draft pick. "He has gotten some big numbers the past four or five games."

"We did a good job of holding our positions on him, and we did a good job of coming down on him and not letting him get into any kind of rhythm."

In other games, the Los Angeles Lakers beat Milwaukee, 111-99, Seattle edged San Antonio, 91-90, Minnesota downed New York, 106-88, Philadelphia defeated Toronto, 94-84, and Orlando beat Miami, 77-75.

Yao had gone 9-for-9 from the field a week earlier at the Staples Center against the Lakers, then had a breakout 30-point, 16-rebound performance against Dallas.

But he managed to get off only four shots against the Clippers.

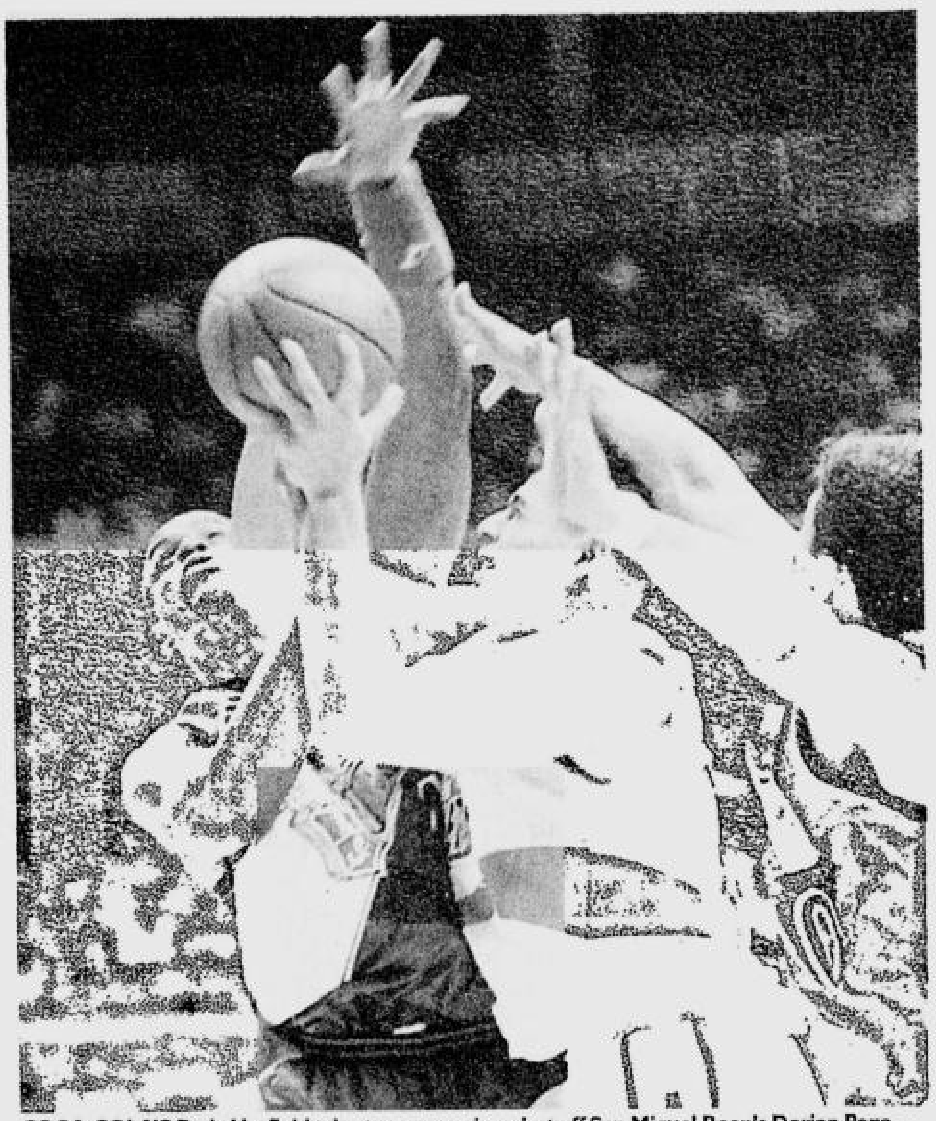
"Olowokandi is very strong and he has very good moves," Yao said. "Wang Zhizhi also guarded me very well."

Houston's Steve Francis, who had 31 points, missed an off-balance 12-footer at the buzzer.

Elton Brand had 26 points and 15 rebounds for the Clippers, who won for just the second time in seven games.

Glen Rice scored 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting for Houston, all in the second half after taking just one shot in the first half.

Lastimosa: We will screen Fil-Ams soon


COCA-COLA'S Rudy Hatfield tries to squeeze in a shot off San Miguel Beer's Dorian Pena (left) and Danny Ildefonso Sunday night in the Selecta-All-Filipino Cup at the Araneta Coliseum. San Miguel won, 94-86, in double overtime. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By June Navarro

THE PBA Players' Association yesterday promised to put up a screening committee of its own that would seriously look into the eligibility of incoming Fil-foreign cagers beginning next season.

LASTIMOSA

Alaska's Jojo Lastimosa, spokesperson of the players' union, said the committee would serve as a safety net from the possible influx of fake Fil-foreign players in the future.

"We don't want to go back to square one whenever a questionable Fil-foreign cager comes along and plays in the PBA. So we're going to come up with our own findings to safeguard the interests of the league and its players," said the 38-year-old Lastimosa, who is set to retire next year.

The senate will hold its own inquiry today on the alleged presence of fake Fil-foreign players in the league.

Senator Robert Barbers, who is launching a campaign to unmask alleged "Fil-shams," has summoned the 30 Fil-foreign cagers in the PBA and some of the league's top officials to show up in the inquiry today for questioning.

Lastimosa said nine Fil-foreign cagers are on Barbers' hit list. He refused to name them.

Lastimosa said the players' union had turned over pieces of evidence to Barbers.

"Let's just leave it to Senator Barbers," said Lastimosa.

At presstime, the players' association was holding its election of officers to revive the union, rendered dormant for nearly half a decade.

Lastimosa said that after the election, the players' association would ask the Commissioner's Office to give them a seat in the board of governors.

UE, FEU start series

GAME TODAY *(Makati Coliseum)*
3 p.m.--Slam dunk/3-point shootout
3:30 p.m.--UE vs FEU

BOTH University of the East and Far Eastern University failed to gain the finals of this year's UAAP basketball tournament.

Now, one of them is certain to go home with the Champions League 2002 crown.

The UE Warriors and the FEU Tamaraws begin their best-of-three title series at 3:30 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum with neither team enjoying a distinct advantage.

"We're looking forward to the finals. We worked really hard to get there," said UE coach Boyzie Zamar after the Warriors semifinal victory over the UV Lancers on Sunday. "FEU is a tough team and we have to play well as a team in order to beat them."

FEU coach Koy Banal expects an interesting game. "I think that both teams will play very good basketball," said banal.

FEU got in only when De La Salle begged off at the last minute after its reserve center, Miguelito Gozum, collapsed and died during an exhibition game at the La Salle Gym. *Roy Luarca*

PBA Board trims down list to 6

THE PBA Board of Governors yesterday trimmed down the list of candidates for the league commissionership to six.

PBA chair Francisco "Butch" Alejo said he would personally subject the six to interviews on separate occasions.

PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino will step down from his post on Dec. 31 for health reasons.

"You have to forgive me for not revealing their names. We still have to talk to the candidates and determine their level of interest," said Alejo, who also sits as president of Purefoods Corporation. "From there, we will proceed with the selection process."

He said the list is a mixture of expected and unexpected aspirants.

"It's simply a combination of what's expected and a sprinkling of 1 or 2 suprising candidates," said Alejo.

Among the candidates are PBA executive director Sonny Barrios, former PBA chair Rey Gamboa, banker Tito Panlilio and Selecta's Elmer Yanga.

Alejo declined to comment on the status of Noli Eala, a Viva sportscaster who is also a candidate. Eala is presently facing adultery raps in court.

Alejo said the board is set to restructure the commissioner's office, adding

Alejo said the new commissioner would be given a free hand to reorganize his office with the board infusing some inputs of how to go about it.

Based on the board's proposal, the commissioner will be on top of the hierarchy. Down the line are the chief marketing and financial officers and the chief operating officer.

Hornets vs 76ers on Solar Sports

THE VETERAN Philadelphia 76ers test the emerging New Orleans Hornets in a game between two of the NBA's front-running teams, "live" at 8 a.m. today on the Solar Sports Network (Channel 29 on Skycable and Homecable), with a replay at 7 p.m.

Both the Hornets and the 76ers are coming off three straight wins and currently rank third and fourth, respectively, in the Eastern Conference, just a win behind the East-leading Detroit Pistons and Indiana Pacers.

Shell-Yamaha dominates motocross

SHELL-YAMAHA is this year's undisputed motocross champion.

Led by Ernie Leongson and Jovie SAulog, Shell-Yamaha ruled six of 10 categories to emerge as the most dominant team in the WG&A Superferry-sponsored motocross series which ended at the Army Adventure Zone, Fort Bonifacio in Taguig recently.

Leongson ruled the centerpiece pro open, Saulog topped the pro 125, Pepo Rubi dominated the expert and Sam Tamayo swept the power enduro, open production and beginner production to complete Shell-Yamaha's day of triumph.

"We're very happy. This is really a big year in motorsports for Shell-Yamaha," said Leongson, who emerged as this year's undisputed "Rider of the Year."

"The whole team is very thankful for all the support we did this year, especially from our fans and supporters and our main sponsors, Shell and Norkis-Yamaha," added Leongson, who also made the country proud with his triumphs in Saipan and Guam early this year.

The multi-titled campaigner from Taytay, Rizal, who rose to prominence with a smashing triumph in 1994, dislodged last year's champion and former Shell-Yamaha teammate Glen Aguilar in the seven-part series also held in Visayas and Mindanao.

Leongson actually finished only second to Aguilar in the seventh and final leg, but it was enough to capture the title with a runaway total.

Overall, Leongson won five of seven legs held this year.

Saulog, the country's winningest motocross rider with seven titles tucked under his belt, finished second to Leongson in the overall standings bsed on the 20-17-15-13-11 scoring system. Another Shell-Yamaha driver—Popeye Rubi—finished third overall.

In the equally exciting pro 125, Saulog bagged the title over Leongson and Aguilar.

PING PONG SUPPORT
Henry Jang (middle), president and general manager of LG Electronics, and Victor Valbuena (extreme right), president of Table Tennis Association of the Philippines, shake hands after signing a contract for the holding of the LG Cup Table Tennis Championship on Dec. 16-21 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum. With them is Princess Galura of the International Management Group.

Revilla, Salud host derby

THE FIVE-MAN team from Saipan, bannered by Rep. Benjamin Sablan, arrived last week in time for the much-awaited "Cavite 7-Cock International Derby" on Dec. 2, 4 and 6 at the Cavite Coliseum.

Sablan, one-time champion of the annual cockfest, is all set to field five entries with a formidable line-up of imported fowl from Saipan and Guam.

Part of the derby's proceeds will be donated by host Sen. Ramon Revilla to the Philippine Mental Health. Derby co-hosts are former PBA commissioner Rudy Salud, Vice Mayor Nestor Mercado and Lito Orillaza. At stake in the derby is a guaranteed prize of P2 million while entry fee is P30,000. The derby will start with the 2-cock eliminations on Monday, Dec. 2, bannering some 100 fights.

Also seeking action are Malaysian cocker Liong Ong and MR Tan of Kota Kinabalu who will team up with Zamboanga's top breeders Boy Primallion, Jun Pe and Mayor Manny Dalipe.

The derby's sponsors are Pagcor and Casino Filipino--Paranaque. For other inquiries, call Ferdie Bautista at tel. 0918-5674921.

Phillies acquire Bell for $17M

PHILADELPHIA–Free agent David Bell, who helped the San Francisco Giants reach last season's World Series, signed a $17 million, four-year contract with the Philadelphia Phillies Sunday.

"We are happy to have David Bell here," Phillies general manager Ed Wade said on the club's official website.

"We are happy to have our third baseman for at least the next four years. This is a huge step in the right direction for us. *Reuters*

PCSO stakes ₱2.4M for Presidential Cup Race

THIRTEEN gallopers, led by returning champ Wind Blown, are set to parade to the post on Dec. 22 at the San Lazaro Hippodrome as they vie for the 30th running of the prestigious Presidential Gold Cup Race, the highlight racing event of the year sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

A total of P2.375 million will be at stake in the annual classic race, held in honor of the country's President, who has been invited to witness the affair and present the awards to the winning connections.

"This event will further reinforce the time-tested partnership between the local horse racing industry and the PCSO in the noble task of generating funds for charity and much-needed revenues for the government," said PCSO chair Ma. Livia "Honeygirl" S. de Leon.

The winner of the PCSO Presidential Gold Cup Race is guaranteed to receive a whopping purse of P1.5-million, with P500,000, P250,000 and P125,000 allotted respectively to the second through fourth placers.

More than pride and prestige will actually be at stake when the country's top thoroughbreds battle it out for the 30th running of the coveted Gold Cup Race as the PCSO simultaneously holds the inaugural draw of its multi-million 7-Digit Sweepstakes in a mega-merger of the country's richest sweepstakes lottery and horse race.

SportsTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - New Orleans vs Philadelphia, 8 a.m., Solar Sports
AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Yearbook 2001 - Philadelphia Eagles, 8:30 a.m. (r), San Francisco 49ers, 9 a.m. (r), ESPN
NFL Blast, 9:30 a.m., ESPN
NFL - Philadelphia Eagles vs San Francisco 49ers, 10 a.m. (r - 8:30 p.m.), ESPN
GOLF: World Amateur Golf Team Championships 2002, 4 p.m. and 11 p.m., Star Sports
POOL: Rack 'Em Up, 5 p.m. (r), ESPN

Cancer benefit from Fil-Estate

THE FIL-ESTATE Sports Foundation, Inc. will celebrate its 4th year anniversary on Dec. 5 through its "Abot Langit Ang Saya" at 9 p.m. at the Giggles Bar, Brick Road, Sta. Lucia Grand Mall, Cainta, Rizal.

The Foundation, which nurtures young athletes with potentials for international excellence, will feature True Faith, with proceeds going to children afflicted with cancer confined at the Philippine General Hospital. Other sponsors are Splash Island, Manila Southwoods Sports Club, Skycable, Manila Southwoods Tennis Academy, PLDT and Hairworks.

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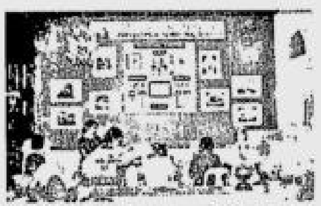
Antonia de Oviedo Center is one of Cebu's havens for abused women and their children.

The center, located at Andres Abellana Extension, Guadalupe, Cebu City, is both a residential care center and a drop-in shelter. It is administered by the congregation of the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer Inc.

Oviedo mainly provides for the education of its young wards. In addition, it also conducts informal interaction and counseling sessions to women workers in clubs, bars, disco houses, red light districts and even to street children. It likewise holds spiritual counseling sessions at the City Health Office both in Lapu-lapu City and Mandaue City.

One of the success stories in the center is about two sisters, Marichu and Joanna (not their real names), who went through an unfortunate plight while they were under the custody of an alcoholic mother and a stepfather who beat them black and blue. Seventeen-year old Joanna relates she had to be separated from Marichu when the latter went through a personal crisis. When the congregation assessed that Joanna herself was a "high risk," she was also brought in to the center but placed in another drop-in unit away from Marichu.

Joanna, now in her 2nd year at the Ramon Duterte Memorial National High School, dreams of becoming a social worker someday. She knows that plenty of opportunities will come her way at the right time.

Together with Joanna at the drop-in center are 13 other girls, age 13 to 24. Capable of accommodating 20 singles, the center is now housing eight mothers and their respective children.

"We are working towards developing and implementing more creative, innovative and sustainable programs and services aimed to enhance and uplift the lives of these prostituted and abused women and girls and their children", says Sr. Conchita.

Just like other altruistic foundations, Oviedo experiences funding constraint. At present, a two-storey building is being constructed for its rehabilitation center in Tayud, Lilo-an, Cebu, under the sponsorship of some organizations from Germany. Yet, the center can further benefit from private organizations and individuals in the country to be able to continue providing Joanna and its other wards with a better tomorrow.

Caltex Philippines, Inc. extends support to Antonia de Oviedo through the Caltex Fund Street-to-School Program established in 1999 to help institutions in the country committed to caring for disadvantaged youth. At present, the company sponsors Oviedo scholars at the Guadalupe Elementary School and at the Ramon Duterte MNHS. Caltex also provides funding to meet the basic needs and supplementary feeding of the children under the center's Mother and Child Program.

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*The DSWD hotline operates from 9am to 9pm only.

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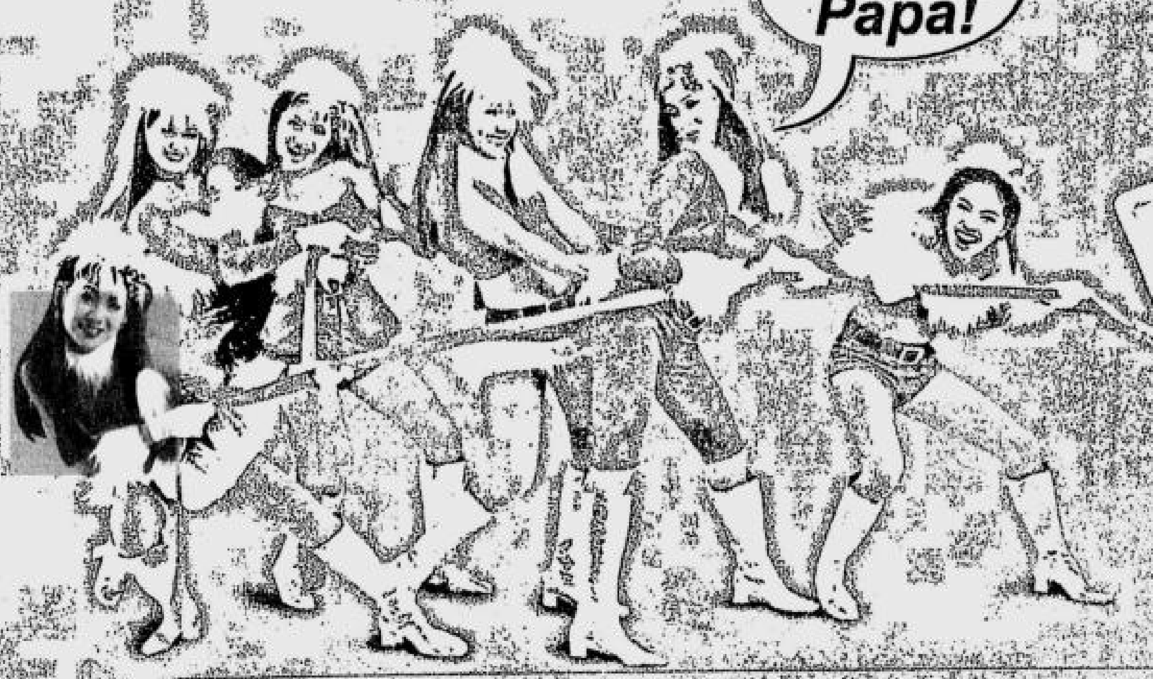
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METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

■ Clan war behind Zambo official's ambush, victim's brother tells cops /A24

■ ON TARGET: Another caper by Colonel Bibit /A25

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Ambush at Cathedral

By Philip C. Tubeza

A FORMER Maguindanao board member and his two companions were ambushed in front of the Manila Cathedral in historic Intramurosat around noon yesterday.

Responding policemen nabbed one of the two gunmen behind the ambush.

Former Board member Jamal Macapigis, the principal target, is in critical condition after he was shot in the face and his right hip, said Detective Ed Paterno, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

But while Jamal, 38, survived, his relative Arman, 45, died after he was shot in the abdomen; while Felix Lidasan, 40, also died after he was hit in his throat.

The police believe politics was behind the killings.

They arrested gunman Usop M. Kamid, 22, of Cotabato City but his cousin Abdul, alias Joel, escaped.

They recovered a .45 caliber pistol from Usop.

All of the victims, like the suspects, are residents of Maharlika Village in Taguig.

The victims had just come out of the Palacio del Gobernador after coming from the Commission on Elections building when the suspects struck at around 11:45 a.m.

The victims were following up the successful election protest of the Macapigi's father, Kahir, against Matanog, Maguindanao mayor Nasser Imam.

Usop said he had been waiting for the victims since 10 a.m. when he saw Jamal come out of the Palacio, which is on the left front side of the cathedral.

The suspects then opened fire on the victims.

Usop said he shot Jamal in the head and then ran away. He said he bumped into Arman and so he also shot him.

Abdul apparently shot Lidasan in the neck in front of the Land Bank branch.

P02s Jose Jurado and Isagani Boral, and a P01 Taladoc, all PNP-Special Action Force members assigned at the Comelec, responded by rushing to the crime scene.

They saw Usop running and they ran after him. Usop fired on them twice but missed.

Boral said he fired a warning shot before they cornered Usop, who eventually surrendered.

Usop claimed that he shot Jamal because of a land dispute between his family and that of the Macapigis clan.

He said his family even sold two carabaos for P36,000 to buy the .45 pistol, worth P32,000, from a man in Maharlika Village.

Usop claimed he had been in Manila for two weeks and just chanced on Jamal who, he admitted was the principal target.

But police believe politics was behind the ambush.

Waiting for Korina

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation is still waiting for ABS-CBN broadcaster Korina Sanchez and businessman George Cadhit to substantiate their accusations that NBI agents tried to extort P200,000 from Cadhit, NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said yesterday.

"If Cadhit files a case, then we will refer it to (the NBI) Internal Affairs (section). It's a waiting game," Wycoco said.

"The same with Korina, if she files cases against anybody," he added.

But Wycoco said that if the two do not pursue charges, then he would "just let things be."

He said he did not want to add to the country's political troubles.

Wycoco said that the word war between the NBI and Sanchez was just "a misunderstanding on the part of some people."

Wycoco said he talked with Sanchez and she told him that she was "just doing her job."

She made a scene at the NBI headquarters before dawn Friday when NBI agents did not allow her to see Cadhit.

The businessman was arrested for failing to pay a jeweler P658,000.

Cadhit is allegedly a cousin of Paul Aquino, who is reportedly Sanchez's boyfriend. *Philip Tubeza*

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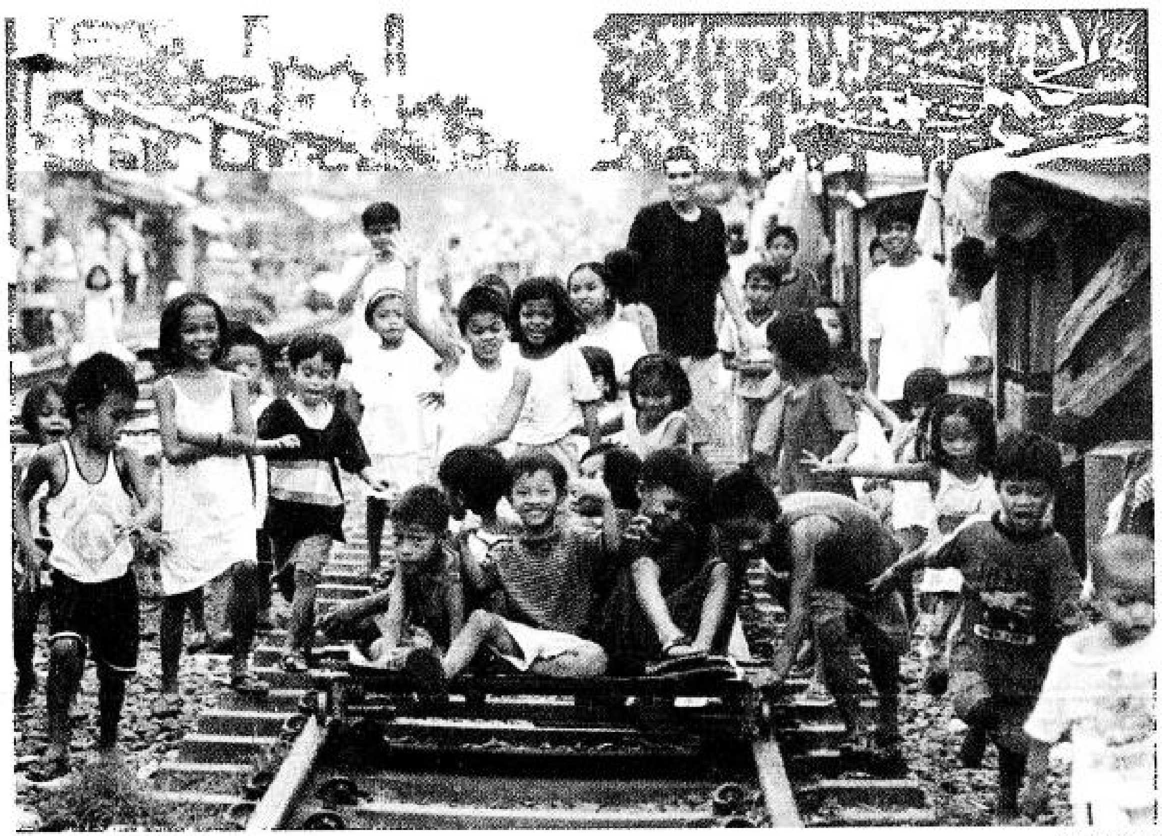
JOAN BONDOC

INNOCENCE They continue to multiply in record numbers, so what if poor children, as these ones living near the train tracks off San Antonio Village in Makati, are often cold and hungry, the Church will always stand against clinical methods to control population growth, because, even with no bright future, these angels can still laugh and play.

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'Po' & 'ho' can improve cops?

By Alcuin Papa

USE "po," "ma'am" or "sir' or start plucking weeds in Camp Bagong Diwa.

This warning was issued by the leadership of the National Capital Region Police Office to all policemen in Metro Manila.

NCRPO chief Deputy Dir. Reynaldo Velasco said yesterday he has ordered his men to begin their transactions with citizenry with words of respect like "po," "ho," "sir," and "ma'am."

Velasco said the new program, dubbed "Police Officer Magalang" and "Pulis Malinis," is aimed at making members of the Metro Manila Police Force approachable to the public and make it easier for them to seek police assistance.

"Through the project, the public's perception of policemen will improve from being discourteous to polite," Velasco said. He added that he would actively campaign for "politeness and courtesy as a must virtue for all police officers in all the five districts down to the precincts."

Violators of Velasco's new order, as well as rogue cops, would be assigned to the NCRPO's "utility platoon." The new platoon has been tasked to act as maintenance personnel in the NCRPO headquarters in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig.

Maintenance work involves cleaning the grounds of the camp and maintaining the buildings inside.

The project's primary goal is to give the public police officers who are presentable and diligent workers as well as police officers who are citizens with clean reputations.

WAzzzzUP?
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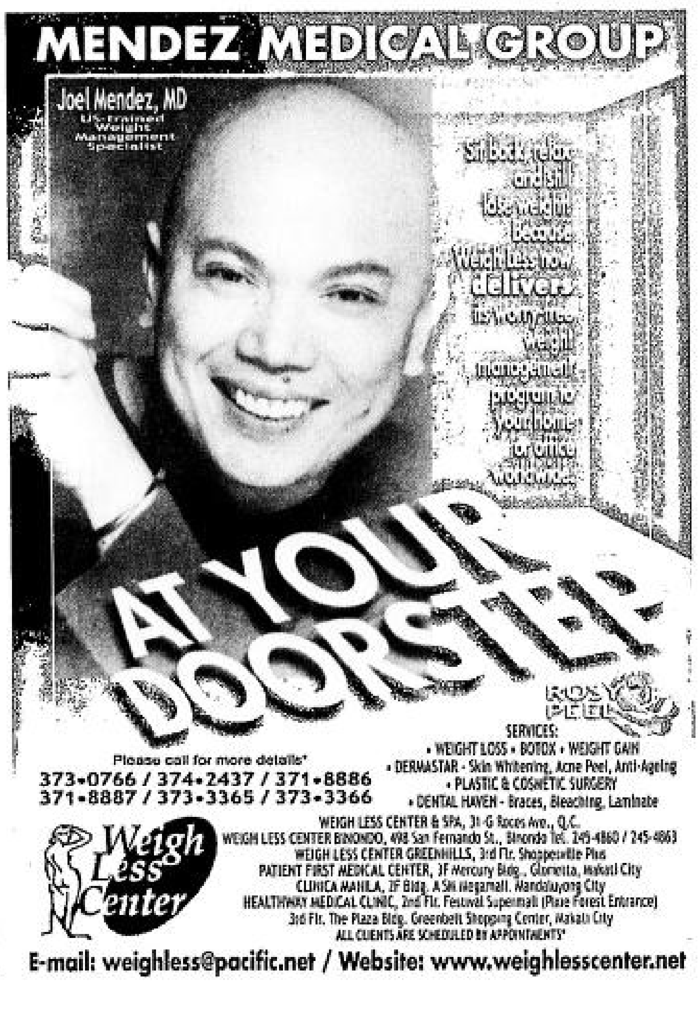
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2. Submit photo entry in 8R format (8" x 10"), either black & white or full color, original and not previously published in any form of print media. Each entry must include the corresponding negative or transparency.
3. Contestants are required to fill out the official application form found in the tabloid, BANDERA, with their name, address, signature, contact number and attach three (3) clippings of the new BANDERA masthead.
4. Photocopies of the application form or the masthead will not be accepted.
5. Send entries to:
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7. PRIZES:
Prizes are as follows
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8. A contestant may win only once. Should one contestant win more than once, He/She will get the prize of higher value.
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Composition: 30%
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Overall Impact: 30%
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11. Deadline for submission of entries is on 6pm of December 18, 2002. Provincial entries must allow one (1) week for mailing. BANDERA will not be responsible for any lost or delayed entries.
12. A panel of judges will determine winning photos with the presence of a DTI representative on December 20, 2002.
13. The list of winners will be published on the December 23, 2002 issue of BANDERA. Winners will also be notified by registered mail
14. All employees of Inquirer Publications, Inc., and its affiliate companies, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the contest.
15. Winners should present winner's notice and two (2) valid IDs when claiming their prize. Prizes may be claimed in the following areas
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c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario Street, Cebu City
DAVAO
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16. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days after receipt of notification will be forfeited in favor of Inquirer Publications, Inc. With prior DTI approval. Inquirer Publications will shoulder the 20% prize tax.
Promo period is from Sept. 23 to Dec. 18, 2002
See print ad in BANDERA for more details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3658, Series of 2002

Clan war behind Zambo official's ambush, victim's brother tells cops

By Christian Esguerra

AN INFLUENTIAL political family in Misamis Occidental was allegedly behind the killing of Zamboanga town Vice Mayor Perfecto Cebedo in Muntinlupa City Sunday night, the victim's older brother said yesterday.

Perfecto's assassination was a result of his family's bloody, 10-year-old political rift with the family of Pacita Yan, former mayor of Sapang Dalaga in Misamis, the victim's brother Prudencio told the INQUIRER.

"They've been threatening to wipe out our family in the last 10 years, all because of politics," said Prudencio, 55.

Yan's children, Rey and Roy, are serving life sentences at the New Bilibid Prison for their role in the killing of Perfecto's brother, Victorio, at the height of the local elections in 1992, according to Prudencio.

He said he himself had survived an ambush in 1995 which the Yans allegedly masterminded.

The Yan family supposedly had Cebedo killed because the vice mayor had been protecting key witnesses in a murder case allegedly involving Pacita and her son Rey, also a former Sapang Dalaga mayor.

Prudencio said Pacita has been in hiding since an arrest warrant was issued against her and her son.

The Cebedo-Yan political war began in 1992 when Victorio Cebedo ran for mayor of Rizal town in Zamboanga del Norte against Roy Yan, according to Prudencio.

Victorio was killed allegedly upon the order of the Yans, prompting Perfecto to take over the candidacy.

CEBEDO

Prudencio said his brother won the election and served as Rizal mayor for three consecutive terms. Perfecto won as vice mayor last year.

Despite Prudencio's allegations, police remain tight-lipped on the Yans' supposed involvement in the ambush.

"All we can say is that the motive was political and (Perfecto) probably knew his killers," said Chief Insp. Rene Lasola, the city's intelligence chief.

Perfecto had just visited ex-Zamboanga Rep. Romeo Jalosjos when he was gunned down in front of his family by five men at the Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang.

The gunmen, on board a red Toyota Corolla (TNW-707), had earlier blocked the victim's white Mitsubishi L-300 van and opened fire.

Seeing his wife Julieta hit in the leg, Perfecto, 52, reportedly got out of the van, walked up to the gunmen, and asked them to spare his family.

The suspects granted his wish and shot him in the head. They then took his wife's bag containing P28,000 before they drove off toward Las Piñas.

The getaway car was traced to a certain Emerson Ong.

Police found 13 empty shells of M-14 and M-16 rifles.

At least 10 bullets penetrated the victim's heavily tinted van.

Man gets 10 years for killing pregnant wife

By Agnes E. Donato

A QUEZON City judge yesterday sentenced Michael Sanchez to at least 10 years in prison for killing his pregnant live-in partner last year by beating her up and hitting her nape with a gin bottle.

Judge Jose Catral Mendoza of the QC Regional Trial Court found Sanchez, of Barangay Sauyo, Novaliches, Quezon City, guilty of homicide.

Sanchez killed Michelle Herrera, with whom he had a daughter, during a fight at about 1 p.m. on April 2, 2001.

Herrera was two months pregnant at the time of her death.

Court records showed that the couple began to fight after Herrera refused to answer Sanchez, who had asked where their daughter was.

After a while, the victim replied she had left the child at her mother's place. This apparently upset Sanchez who slapped the woman.

A violent dispute ensued, during which Sanchez hit Herrera several times more, forcing her to run out of the house. The man however caught up with her and hit her with a bottle of gin in the nape.

Herrera lost consciousness and was taken to the Sauyo Emergency Clinic. She was transferred to the Bernardino General Hospital where she died the following day.

In his defense, Sanchez denied that he had hit Herrera with a bottle, saying the worst thing he had done to her was slap her.

He also claimed Herrera fell to the ground because she suddenly had an asthma attack.

Citing the autopsy done on Herrera's body, Judge Mendoza maintained that Sanchez had killed Herrera beyond reasonable doubt.

He noted that the multiple injuries the victim sustained belied Sanchez's claim that he merely slapped Herrera.

Still, the judge claimed that the killing was not an act of murder.

"The mere striking with an empty gin bottle at the nape does not necessarily indicate that he had intentionally employed such means to insure the killing without risk to himself," Mendoza said.

Mendoza sentenced Sanchez to a prison term ranging from 10 years to 14 years and eight months. He also ordered the convict to pay Herrera's relatives P146,000 in damages.

Asistio sues Malonzo, PDI execs for libel

By Agnes Donato

FORMER Caloocan City Mayor Macario Asistio Jr. yesterday filed libel charges against his archrival, Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, and two executives of the Philippine Daily Inquirer in connection with a news story where the complainant was accused of owing back taxes to the Caloocan City government.

Aside from Malonzo, Asistio named INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot and editor in chief Letty Jimenez Magsanoc as respondents in the charge sheet he filed before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Asistio based his complaint on paragraph 3 of a news story, titled "Caloocan Goes After Deliquent Taxpayers," that came out in the INQUIRER's Metro section on Oct. 20.

The paragraph read: "Malonzo said the city government is set to sell four lots said to be owned by former Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr., located in Sangandaan, Camarin, Bagbaguin and Kaybiga in the city.

"The said statement said Asistio owed the city government P440,442 in back taxes."

In his affidavit, Asistio claimed that Malonzo made this statement to get back at him because he had charged the incumbent mayor with graft and corruption "for the notorious sale of a certain property of the city to Ever Gotesco."

"This news story is completely false and libelous because I do not own the properties (it) referred to and therefore I have no tax accountability whatsoever to the city government of Caloocan," Asistio said.

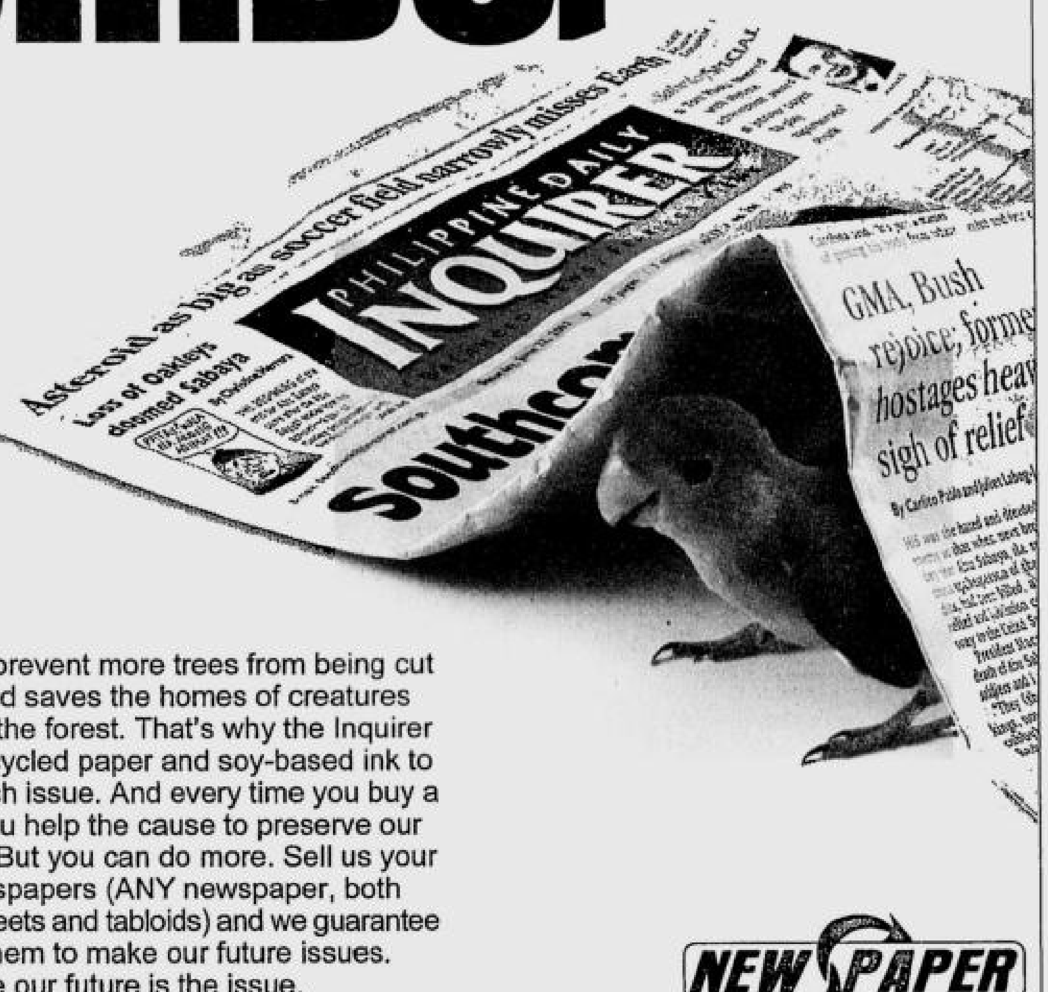
He also denied that the properties were owned by his father, who died in 1981.

"(Another) evidence that the publication was designed to malign me is the fact that the so-called delinquency started for some of the properties in 1980, and yet the auction and publicity are (being) done only now," Asistio said.

He noted that as a mayor, Malonzo should know that properties may be auctioned after seven years of delinquency.

"The said news story maligned my person and besmirched my reputation and exposed me to public ridicule and ignominy by labeling me as a delinquent taxpayer and, in effect, a tax evader, thus causing me sleepless nights, serious anxiety and mental anguish," Asistio said.

"The publisher and editor in chief of the Philippine Daily Inquirer were recreant in their duties by publishing this libelous article and were, in effect, in conspiracy with Malonzo in its publication," he added.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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
News that makes a difference.

Chinese, 2 Filipinos caught with kilo of shabu in Manila

TJ Burgonio

A CHINESE national and two Filipinos were arrested in Sta. Cruz, Manila on Saturday afternoon for allegedly trying to sell a kilo of shabu worth P1 million, the police announced yesterday.

The suspects were identified as Tan Wei Li, 40, of Fookien, China; and Ameril Andamen, 56, and Usop Abdulkader, 31, both of Nepomuceno Street in Quiapo, Manila.

The three were arrested after handing over a large transparent plastic bag containing a kilo of shabu, or methamphetamine hydrochloride, to undercover lawmen during a drug bust on T. Alonzo Street in Sta. Cruz around 4 p.m. Saturday.

The three would be charged for violating RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, said Supt. Miguel Laurel, chief of the regional intelligence special operations office in Taguig.

Lawman nabbed for shooting driver

PO2 DENNIS D. Samson, a member of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Pasay Police, has been accused of indiscriminately firing his gun in a Makati neighborhood Sunday night.

Police said tricycle driver Ferdinand Martinez, 27, was wounded in the shooting.

But Samson told police that he was provoked by Jerry O. Tuazon, a 30-year-old artist and resident of Barangay La Paz, who allegedly stabbed him in his right arm.

According to SPO1 Joel Delos Santos, Samson said he accompanied his friend Roberto C. Pavito, 41, who makes advertising signs, to talk to Tuazon, his employee, about work-related concerns.

Delos Santos said Samson tried to intervene when Pavito and Tuazon began to argue over unfinished projects. But Tuazon allegedly took out a knife and stabbed Samson, sparking a free-for-all, with Tuazon's family and some neighbors joining in. To restore order, Samson allegedly fired his 9-mm firearm four times and hit Martinez.

Samson was taken into custody after the incident. *Leila Salaverria*

My Bro's Mustache opens in Malate

AFTER Quezon City and Makati, Malate gets infected with folk fever as My Bro's Mustache Folkbar opens today its third branch on Nakpil Street at 7:30 p.m.

Listen to true-blue folk artists as they lend voices to songs of the flower generation. Enjoy real acoustic guitars as they clink to the sounds of James Taylor, America, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, or Carly Simon, courtesy of Mustache artists. Leading the night's jam sessions are Mon Espia and Koko Marbella of the famed Labuyo. Jamming for more folk are Wally Gonzalez, Joey Ayala, Jess Bartolome, Lester Demetillo, Albert de Pano and The Folk Cause Artists.

4 cops jailed for extortion

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA regional trial court judge yesterday sentenced four former Manila policemen to eight years in prison for extorting money from the daughter of convicted "drug queen" Yu Yuk Lai three years ago.

RTC Branch 27 Judge Teresa Soriaso found guilty SPO1 Gerardo Rivera, PO2 Fernando Coloma, PO2 Jonard de Leon.

Prosecutors originally charged the four with kidnapping for ransom, but Judge Soriaso said it was very clear that the suspects wanted to extort money by intimidating victim Diana Yu Uy.

The victim failed to appear in court for the continuation of her direct examination, so her testimony was stricken from the trial records.

Uy was abducted by the suspects on Aug. 17, 1999 in Sta. Cruz, Manila. Her money and jewelry were also stolen.

When Uy called Yu, one of the suspects told Yu that her daughter would be implicated in a case involving two kilos of shabu if she would not pay up P5 million.

Yu was able to lower the "ransom" to P1 million and three cars. Yu then contacted Senior Supt. Cesar Mancao, then chief of the Luzon unit of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

That same night, Yu went to the payoff site at the Cultural Center of the Philippines where the suspects were arrested by Mancao and his men.

In her 23-page decision, Judge Soriaso said the purging of Uy's testimony "does not exculpate the accused, as it does not destroy the prosecution's case."

But the additional charges filed against the policemen—highway robbery and car theft—were dismissed because of the absence of Uy's testimony and documentation.

The court also dropped the case of illegal possession of firearms against the suspects after they were found to have the appropriate permits for their guns.

One fact that cropped up during the trial was that Yu was at the Casino Filipino-Heritage Hotel in Pasay City when her daughter called her for help.

At that time, Yu was supposed to be in the custody of the national police's Anti-Narcotics Groups.

Yu and a nephew were arrested for selling three kilos of shabu on Nov. 7, 1998.

FATHER AND SON
Without a roof over their heads and with mere rags to cover their backs, a father and his son get to squeeze enviable laughter and enjoyment from each other, finding much to live and be thankful for.
ERIK ARAZAS

Birthday bash for year-old girl turns into a bloodbath

By Philip Tubeza

A BIRTHDAY party for a year-old girl turned into a bloodbath when one of the guests went on a stabbing spree, killing a 17-year-old boy, and wounding two other youths, police said.

Rogelio Pantia Jr., 17, of Pier 2, North Harbor, died while guests Abdul Toto, 22, and a 16-year-old youth of Purok 2, both residents of North Harbor, were injured, said Detective Alfredo Salazar, of the Western Police District homicide section.

Members of Pantia's family celebrated their niece's first birthday on Sunday night.

But when the guests wound up the celebrations at around 7 p.m., a brawl erupted among the partygoers in front of the house.

Pantia's mother Myrna took her father inside their house. The baby was already safe inside their home.

But Myrna forgot her son, Rogelio, who was stabbed during the brawl.

"We still don't know what really happened, but I think Pantia and the two other victims were the ones who started the fight," Salazar said.

Pantia was taken to the Gat Andres Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival, Salazar added.

Toto and the other wounded victim were also stabbed and taken to the same hospital, Salazar said.

Both victims are now recovering, he added.

Salazar said the police are investigating reports that the fight had something to do with a string of recent robberies in the victims' neighborhood.

Crazed man leaps off Tondo rooftop with his son, 6

By Philip Tubeza

EDGAR G. Ramos, 34, said demons were after him when he jumped off the rooftop of the Ospital ng Tondo in Manila on Sunday night.

Unfortunately, the crazed man took his son with him when he took the plunge.

Ramos, who is heavily built, survived the fall, but his son did not, police said.

Glarian V. Nikki Ramos, 6, a grade one student, of Prado Siongco, Lubao, Pampanga, died in the fall, said Detective Edmundo Cabal, of the Western Police District homicide section.

Witnesses told investigators that they saw that the elder Ramos was "restless" inside the hospital on Abad Santos Avenue, Tondo, at around 7:50 p.m. on Sunday.

A few minutes later, he climbed to the fifth floor and jumped, taking his son with him.

The two landed on the rooftop of a house beside the hospital.

Bystanders tried to help the two and took them to the hospital.

But it was too late for Glarian— doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Police said they are investigating the hospital's security guards. The elder Ramos was not a patient in the hospital and that he just sneaked in.

Chief Insp. Juanito Taluban, WPD homicide section chief, said they want to find out how the father was able to get in the hospital without the guards noticing his eccentric behavior.

Ramos was later taken to the WPD headquarters, where he claimed that demons were after him.

"His statements were inconsistent," Taluban said. "We're now checking if he is deranged or if he took drugs."

Another caper by Colonel Bibit

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

MORE than 160 containers full of smuggled rice from Thailand have been ordered held by high officials of the Bureau of Customs in Manila.

But retired Col. Billy Bibit, Cebu customs collector, continues to defy orders from his superiors to seize the smuggled rice, according to customs sources at the Cebu port.

The same sources told me some of the containers might have been shipped out of the piers with their consignees paying minimal or no taxes and duties at all on the contraband.

* * *

This is not the first time this corner exposed Bibit's reported defiance of orders from his superiors in Manila to seize smuggled rice unloaded at the Port of Cebu.

Last month, this column also reported that 70 containers of smuggled rice were ordered seized by top customs officials in Manila, but Bibit defied the orders.

Bibit learned I was going to come up with the exposé. He beat me to it by seizing the contraband. So, when the column item about the unseized smuggled rice came out on Oct. 5, the exposé was already, as lawyers are wont to say, "moot and academic."

* * *

The value of the smuggled rice from Thailand that remains unseized is estimated at P60 million.

Smuggled rice tops the list in President Macapagal-Arroyo's banned items as it competes with locally grown rice. The President said she wanted to protect rice farmers.

My customs sources said that smuggled rice is landed at the Port of Cebu because it has become a "free port" for all contraband, especially rice.

* * *

Customs intelligence agents in Manila can't go to Cebu to seize the smuggled rice because they're afraid of crossing swords with Bibit and his band of 40 or so fully armed bodyguards.

These bodyguards are not customs personnel. They were recruited by Bibit from the ranks of the unemployed members of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan (RAM), which figured in several coup attempts during the Aquino administration. Bibit, himself a RAM member, pays their salaries from his own pocket.

The customs district office in Cebu has practically become an autonomous district, with little or no supervision from the Manila office.

* * *

Everybody at the customs bureau, from Commissioner Antonio Bernardo to the chief of the intelligence and investigation service, Godofredo Olores, is afraid of Bibit.

Both Olores and Bibit are former military officers. Olores is Bibit's upperclassman at the Philippine Military Academy.

If everybody is afraid of Bibit, who will discipline the insubordinate customs official?

* * *

If the claim of Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez about Justice Secretary Hernando Perez is true...wow!

And another wow!

A man's home is his castle and therefore he is king. No guest has any right to insult a man in his own home. Especially so if the lord of the house happens to be a congressman.

If, as Jimenez has claimed, Perez shouted and cursed him right in front of his family and domestics, *sobra naman ang tapang niya*! He was carrying his being a Batangueño machismo a bit too far.

* * *

Even if Jimenez was a fugitive from justice in the United States, Perez did not have any right to insult him in front of his family and domestics right in his own home.

Perez, Jimenez said, got mad when he would not give to the justice secretary the names of ousted President Erap's financiers.

Jimenez is facing extradition to the US. The US government says Jimenez is facing several charges in American courts, including tax evasion and illegal campaign contributions. The extradition case is being handled by the Department of Justice.

Tsk, tsk, tsk! The Pandora's box on the justice secretary has been opened.

* * *

Not only Perez, but also his No. 1 protege, an official at the Bureau of Corrections, is under fire.

Subordinates of Perez's protege have come out to denounce the correction official's alleged illegal activities at the National Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa.

The official's son and two sons-in-law, according to my NBP sources, are involved in the smuggling of drugs and liquor into the maximum security cells inside the NBP.

* * *

The headline in this column— "I'm sorry, my friend"—last Saturday did not match the item about the concerned corrections official.

The paragraphs about my friendship with the corrections official were not included for lack of space.

I'd like to come out with those missing paragraphs here:

"I am so sorry that I had to make this exposé considering that you've been very friendly with me.

"But I have a job to do, my friend. I labored over whether to write the exposé or just have other journalists do it.

"Friendship ends where public interest begins.

"I'm so sorry.

"Thank you very much for the delicious food that the missus would serve me when I came visiting your quarters.

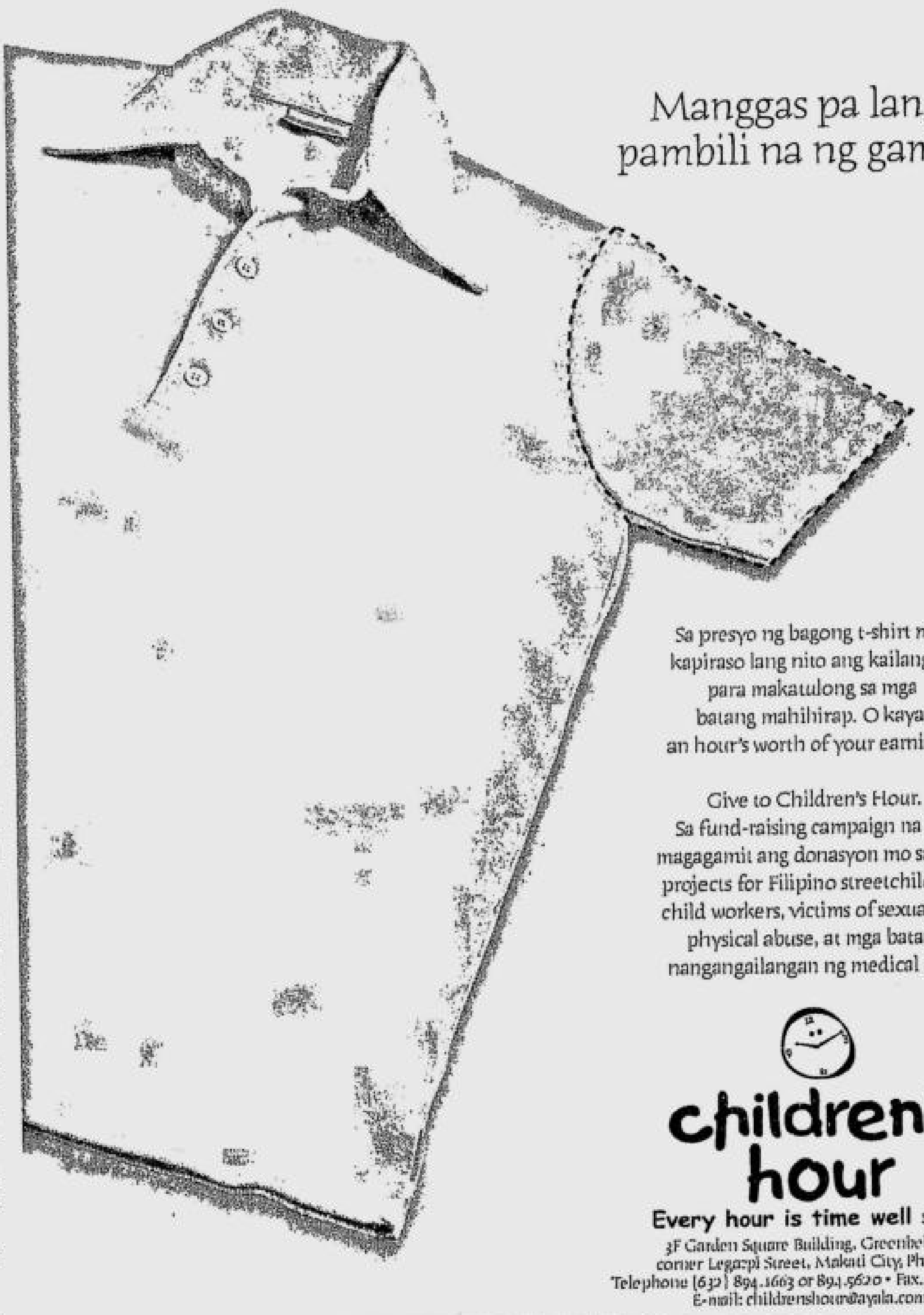
"Thank you for allowing me to practice at the NBP firing range, sometimes even providing me with free ammunition."

Judge rapped for killing mayor's driver

POLICE yesterday filed murder and illegal gun possession charges against Antipolo Judge Francisco Querubin, who allegedly shot and killed a driver of Antipolo Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan on Friday night due to a traffic altercation.

Querubin was charged two days after he allegedly shot and killed Gerardo Martinez, 44.

Records showed that the suspect was driving his car when he cut the path of the victim who was on his motorcycle at the corner of P. Oliveros Street and Circumferential Road, Barangay Dela Paz at about 9:30 p.m., said Supt. Jose Dayco, Antipolo City police chief. *Nelson Flores*



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Group hits case dismissal versus Dusit manager

By Leila B. Salaverria

MEMBERS of the Manggagawang Kababaihan Mithi ay Paglaya (Makalaya) yesterday denounced the decision of a Makati prosecutor dismissing the attempted rape and sexual harassment charges filed against the general manager of the Dusit Hotel Nikko.

In a rally in front of the Makati Prosecutor's Office that coincided with the celebration of the International Day to End Violence Against Women, the group's members denounced the resolution penned by Prosecutor Imelda Saulog.

They wore dark glasses and had peso bills taped to their mouths to symbolize "the blinding of the justice system by influential people and the silencing of its mandate by money."

"The resolution... is a telling tale of the dilemma women have to confront amidst physical and psychological attacks on their persons," the group said in a statement.

Makalaya Secretary General Mylene Hega said the decision implies a lack of consideration for the victims of sexual assault.

"We seem to be 'Hollywoodish' in our appreciation of sexual assault that includes a lot of touching, movement, and resistance. In real life, sexual assault can happen anytime, anywhere, with the slightest of whimper so long as the woman feels violated," she said in a statement.

She added that the dismissal of the case against the hotel executive mirrors the sad plight of sexual harassment victims.

"This case follows a line of frustrated cases that bucked down under the pressure of influence and a law that does not have enough teeth to allow the victims redress," Hega said.

On July 19, a physical therapist of the Clark Hatch Fitness Center, a concessioner of Dusit, filed attempted rape and sexual harassment charges against the hotel's General Manager Chiyuki Fujimoto.

The victim accused Fujimoto of molesting her and attempting to sleep with her while she was giving him a massage last June 25.

A Makati prosecutor dismissed the case for lack of evidence.

Saulog said the attempted rape charges were dismissed because Fujimoto did not perform other acts to show that he had the intention of sleeping with the physical therapist, according to the prosecutor.

The prosecutor also dismissed the sexual harassment charge because the incident did not take place in a "work-related or employment environment."

Diseases coming with Quezon landfill, warns Greenpeace

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PROPOSED garbage facility in Quezon Province would risk the health of residents by causing cancer and birth diseases, Greenpeace warned yesterday.

Citing international health studies, Greenpeace toxic campaigner Von Hernandez said all sanitary landfills, including the one being eyed in Quezon, contaminate nearby areas through their liquid residue.

"The Quezon facility will be no different," he said. "Soon water coming from the garbage would pose many problems on the health of residents."

Instead of pushing for the Quezon landfill, Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, should impose his iron-hand tactics on households and force them to segregate wastes, Hernandez said.

"This is where we need his creativity and no-nonsense attitude," he said. "He would be violating the law if he could not force people to segregate."

Without segregation at the household level, the landfill would fail since it would still be left to accommodate mixed garbage, the Greenpeace official said.

"The real purpose of landfills is to accommodate only residual wastes, meaning those which can no longer be recycled," he said.

Fernando is trying to convince Quezon residents and local officials to allow the MMDA to convert a 2,000-hectare property into a landfill for the 6,000 tons of garbage produced daily in Metro Manila.

A provincial board member had described the proposal as dead because of a resolution banning the "Waste Rail Transfer and Processing Project of the MMDA."

BF won't give up

IF PLANS to acquire a vast area in Quezon don't push through, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday said he would look for the landfill space in the lahar areas of Northern Luzon.

Fernando said one glitch to this plan is the absence of railroads going to the north.

Plans to build railways going to Malolos, Bulacan are in the offing, but building ones going to Pampanga would take a long time to finish, Fernando said.

Another alternative being considered is to bring the garbage to the the sea or to use incinerators.

"If we use incinerators, we'll have to ask for amendments to the law," Fernando said.

That is why, he said, the sanitary landfill and waste processing facility in Quezon remain a viable option.

Fernando said residents of Quezon are still in the "emotional phase" of their reaction to the MMDA's proposal, that is why he is prepared to conduct a relentless information campaign to change their mindset. *L. Salaverria*

Terrible times for UP med students

By Philip C. Tubeza

SORRY, BAGSAK PO KAYO!
MALI YATA ANG EKSAMENG KINUHA KO, A...
Hepne

INSTEAD of learning compassion, University of the Philippines-Manila medical students are getting a lesson on how to be callous.

This is one of the effects of the growing budget cuts in UP's budget.

The cut for next year amounts to P13.9 million, said Delen dela Paz, president of the All UP Academic Employees Union-UP Manila chapter

The budget for state colleges and universities were also cut by P143.9 million.

"It teaches the students to be callous. They have to explain why no one can take care of patients or why there are not enough (medical) supplies," Dela Paz said.

She said the Philippine General Hospital refers patients to other hospitals.

Erwin Abueva, head of the medical student's council, said that they had to refer a woman who was about to give birth to another hospital last week.

He said the woman did not pass some of the hospital's strict requirements.

Dela Paz added that the budget cuts have also left the PGH lacking in chemical reagents. With this lack of supplies, charity patients are told to have their diagnostic tests in other hospitals, which charge double for the tests.

As of now, only tests on blood sugar, electrolytes, and urinalysis, are conducted at the PGH.

The wards also allegedly are lacking in supplies of antibiotics and IV tubes and fluids.

"This has been happening for a long time, especially during the last quarter of the year. But it's worse now," she said.

Around 5,000 patients go to the PGH each day but charity patients are given only P2,000 for their entire stay.

The budget cuts have also affected the hazard pay of the hospital's rank and file.

Dela Paz said UP Manila students, faculty, and administrative staff will march to Mendiola today to protest the budget cuts.

Delegations from UP campuses in Diliman, Quezon City; Los Baños, Laguna, and San Fernando, Pampanga, will also join the protest action.

Para maging maganda ang daloy ng buhay natin, maglinis! Good government starts with you.

A FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT
of Edgar Diego, Private Citizen

Help this helpless man

DIONISIO Jose Ulep, a father of three, does not wish for anything but to see his children finish their studies. There's little chance he could succeed.

Ulep, 42, is stricken by a fatal disease. He is suffering from end-stage renal disease and has been in and out of the National Kidney Institute since last year.

He was supposed to have undergone a kidney transplant last September, but the kidney donated to him was not compatible.

Ulep's heart, enlarged, could not pump blood normally, and he often vomited blood and has to have transfusion regularly.

Unable to work, Ulep has passed on the burden of earning money for the family's basic needs and his medication to his wife and their children.

Aside from occasional donations, the family also gets P1,000 monthly from one of Ulep's sisters and another P1,800 monthly in partial disability pension from the Social Security System (SSS).

Of course, this is far from enough, as Ulep spends around P1,000 daily for his medicine and medical consultations.

Meanwhile, his scheduled kidney transplant is expected to cost P360,000.

Those blessed with a kind heart may contact the Uleps through Ligaya Fajardo at 9427730.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 26, 2002
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rev 14:14-19
Gospel: Lk 21:5-11

While some people were talking about the Temple, remarking that it was adorned with fine stonework and rich gifts, Jesus said to them, "The days will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another of all that you now admire; all will be torn down." And they asked him, "Master, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?"

Jesus then said, "Take care not to be deceived, for many will come claiming my title and saying: 'I am he, the Messiah; the time is at hand.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and troubled times, don't be frightened; for all this must happen first, even though the end is not so soon."

And Jesus said, "Nations will fight each other and kingdom will oppose kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and plagues; in many places strange and terrifying signs from heaven will be seen."

Commentary

The Temple for the Jews was the sign of national identity. Their nation was formed around the Temple and its worship. That is why when Jesus announces the Temple's destruction, it is as if he was talking about the disappearance of the people of Israel. In a way, that is what happened. Through Jesus the promise of salvation given to the Jewish people is now open to all. Through his death the New Covenant is offered to all men and women. That's why the Church always keeps its doors open. The Good News is not solely for us. It is God's gift for all humanity.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—When proof of character of the victim is admissible—In homicide cases, a pertinent character trait of the victim is admissible in 2 situations: (1) as evidence of the deceased's aggression; and (2) as evidence of the state of mind of the accused. The pugnacious, quarrelsome or trouble-seeking character of the deceased or his calmness, gentleness and peaceful nature, as the case may be, is relevant in determining whether the deceased or the accused was the aggressor. When the evidence tends to prove self-defense, the known violent character of the deceased is also admissible to show that it produced a reasonable belief of imminent danger in the mind of the accused and a justifiable conviction that a prompt defensive action was necessary. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Puno, People v. Lee, G. R. No. 139070, May 29, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: *Sino ang gusto niyong maging presidente—si* GMA *o si* FPJ?

Man on the street: *A, walang duda, ang gusto namin, si* LPG!

(How did FPJ become LPG—?!)

***

Host: You have gotten a lot of criticisms for the past few weeks. How has it affected you?

Official: Well, I must confess and admit, it had a negative effect on my mental state of mind.

(Mental *na*, state of mind *pa*?)

***

Host: With the national elections coming again in 2004, what problems can we expect to face again?

Guest: Well, it goes without saying, we will have to expose again many cases of electrical fraud!

(Paging the Comelec—or Meralco?)

***

Host: What is the rumor in your office, explaining why the second in command is now in hot water?

Guest: It's like a telenovela!

Host: What do you mean?

Guest: He's accused of carrying an affair on his lady boss!

(Don't be so graphic—please!)

***

Host: Do you think the senator's commercial is aboveboard?

Guest: No, I don't think so. It's obvious that the commercial is jeered for the next elections!

(That's geared, not jeered—so, stop jeering.)

***

Host: What are the latest figures on damage from the recent storm?

Co-host: The storm brought down more than 100 tobacco houses.

(*Ay*, tobacco house!)

Host: Did you like the new Harry Potter film?

Co-host: Very much! I saw it with my whole nephews and nieces.

(Well, at least they weren't in bits and pieces!)

***

Quizmaster: *Ano ang apelyido ng* cartoon family *na kinabibilangan nina* Bart, Homer, Lisa *at* Marge?

Contestant: Holmes!

(Dr. Margie Holmes is not a member of the Simpson family!)

***

Q: *Ang bida sa pelikulang* "Karate Kid" *ay bihasa sa anong* martial art?

C: Judo!

(No, Karate!)

***

Q: The term "lunar" refers to which celestial body?

C: Galaxy!

(No, the moon.)

***

Q: *Ang* Laoag *ay* capital *ng anong* province?

C: Pangasinan

(Laoag, Pangasinan?—I don't think so! The right answer is Ilocos Norte.)

***

Q: *Ano ang* female equivalent *ng* "sorcerer"?

C: Mangkukulam!

(No, sorceress!)

Movies on TV

ON the HBO Channel: Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 12 noon, "Joan of Arc." 8 p.m., "Band of Brothers: Crossroads/Bastogne)." 10 p.m., "Six Feet Under: Life's Too Short." 11 p.m., "Pay It Forward." Wednesday, Nov. 27 at 9:45 a.m., "The World According to Garp." 5 p.m., "Lost in Yonkers." 11:10 p.m., "Patriot Games."

Thursday, Nov. 28 at 1:55 a.m., "Hefner: Unauthorized." Friday, Nov. 29 at 10 a.m., "Hanover Street." 1:30 p.m., "Mary Shelly's Frankenstein." 3:30 p.m., "Love and Basketball." Saturday, Nov. 30 at 1:15 p.m., "The Patriot."

ATE GUY CLONE. Teri Aunor will perform at Klowns Comedy Bar.

Solo show

NORA Aunor lookalike Teri Aunor, will stage his first major show, "Teri Kinesis," 9 tonight at the Klownz Comedy and Sing-Along Bar in Quezon City.

Teri started his career as a sing-along master at The Library. He was later recognized as one of the impersonators of Ate Guy.

In fact, he's the only one being acknowledged and endorsed by Ganap, the biggest and most acknowledged fans club of the award-winning actress, because of his strong resemblance with the superstar.

Aside from hosting at sing-along joints, Teri also appears on TV as Jolina Magdangal's friend in GMA 7's weekly daytime drama series, "Kahit Kailan."

Teri attests working with Jolina was one of the most exciting experiences he had as a gay comedian.

Jolina will be Teri's special guest tonight in "Teri-Kinesis." It will be Jolina's birthday gift to the singer-comedian who also celebrates his birthday today.

For ticket reservation, call 411-1488, 371-4870 or 0917-810 9394.

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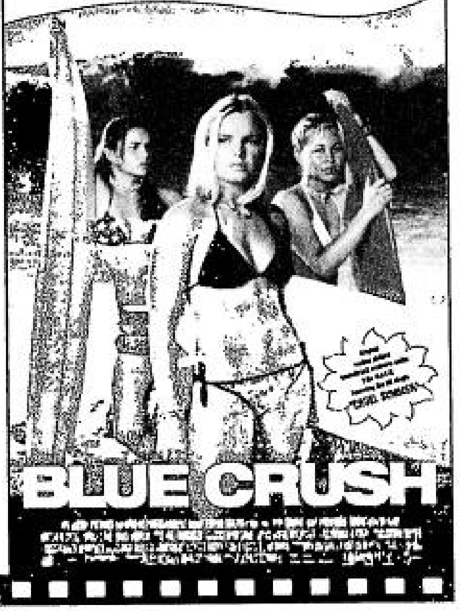

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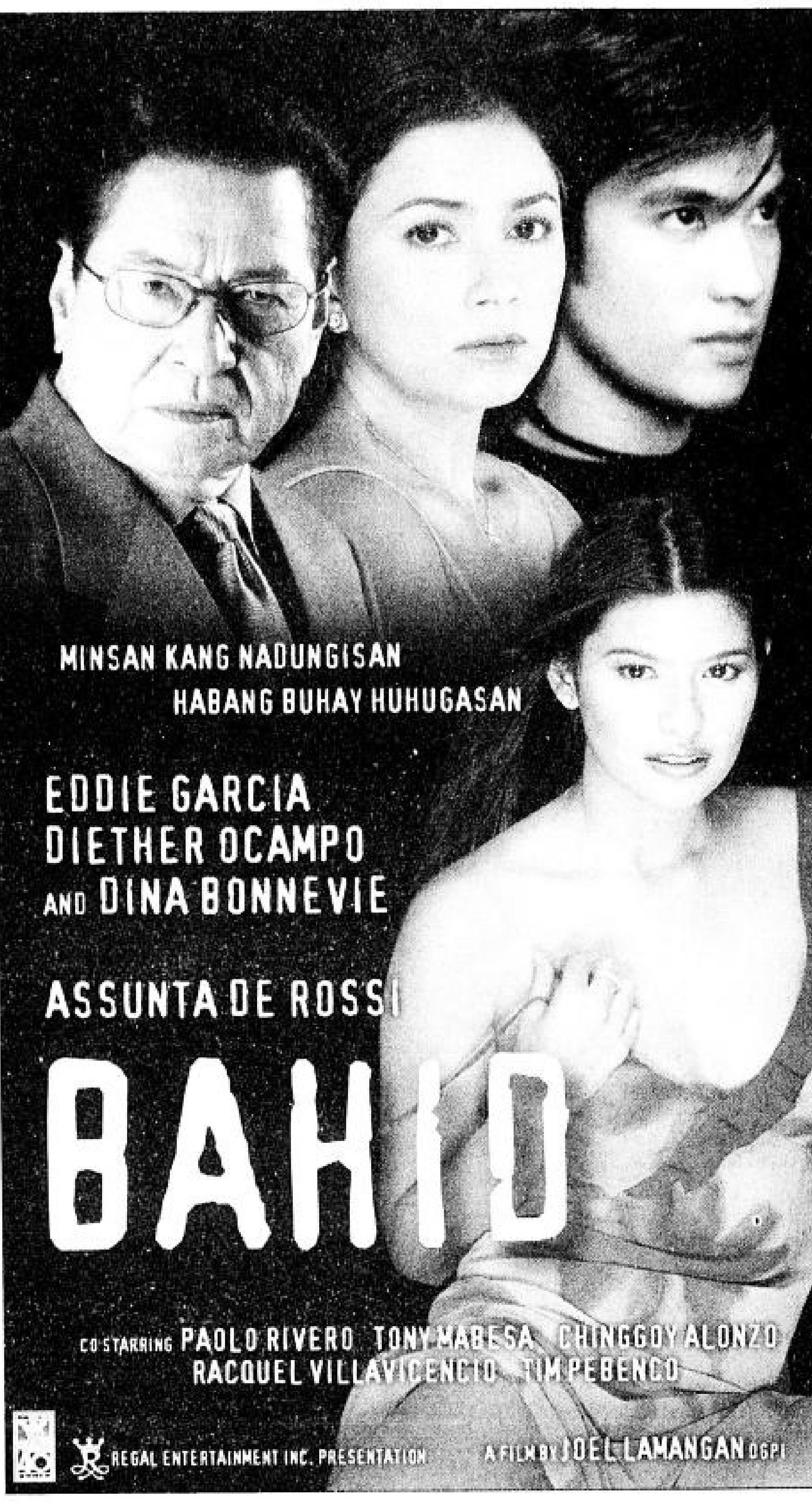
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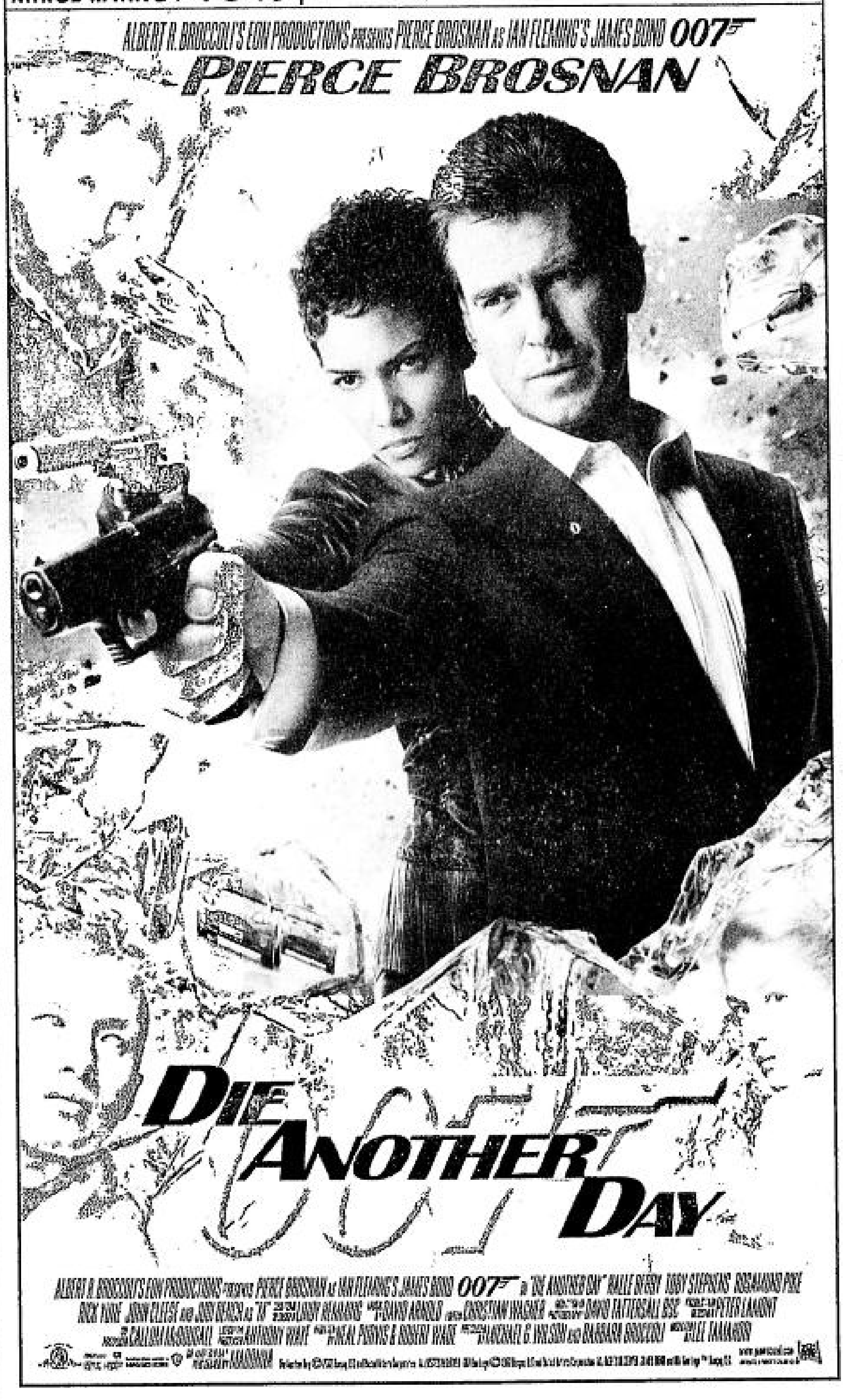
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HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS 12:20, 3:40, 7:00, 10:20
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7 MASTER OF DISGUISE

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8 TRANSPORTER
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11 HIBLA
12 BRAZEN WOMEN

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8 HARRY POTTER 2

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3 SWEET HOME ALABAMA
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Diether remains close to family and old friends

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

INTERVIEWING **Diether Ocampo** has always been a treat for me. We know each other too well that I sometimes forget how famous he is. I can't seem to draw the line between his being a big star and being a true friend.

It's Diet's being in touch with his real self that has propelled him to reach greater heights. He does not let the trappings of success get into his head.

Some stars get spoiled by the perks of their job. Diet works harder to deserve the fringe benefits of fame.

I met up with him to talk about his latest starrer "Bahid" and to touch base with a friend I'm eternally indebted to for being there for me.

Dolly Anne: How bold is your role in "Bahid?"

Diether: Bold enough.

What's your role? Is there anything about it that you can relate to?

D: I play a spineless guy but came to realize the truth of the situation around me. That made me morph into a stronger character. I can identify with my character's emotional angst.

How different is it from the other roles you have portrayed?

D: I think it's the vulnerability of my character. I've shown a more mature presentation of my character.

What did you learn from Dina Bonnevie while you were shooting the movie?

D: I learned a lot from her, especially on how to be organized with both my career and my new business.

What was the hardest scene to shoot?

D: My kissing scene with Dina.

What was the most memorable dialogue for you?

D: "*Huwag kayong magmalinis! Pareho kayong magkapatid. Pareho kayong may baho!*"

How's your lovelife?

D: It needs some modification... Ha, ha, ha!

How happy are you now? Is there anything you still wish for?

D: I'm happy, I guess. Although I'm missing a partner I can spend all the glories in my life with.

"Bahid" sort of means a mark or a trace. Any traces from your past you are still trying to deal with?

D: I was a notorious delinquent kid, but I learned a lot from my mistakes. For me, "Bahid" is stigma. I guess I don't have that. I changed my ways and became responsible.

What trait did you have before that is still in you now?

D: I have remained simple and close to my family and old friends.

What experience from your past had the greatest impact on you?

D: I think the most significant experience was when my father died when I was still a young boy. That made me weak at first, but in the long run it made me stronger.

Any experience in your past that you wish you could change?

D: The time when I was in college. I wish I had taken it seriously.

How do you see yourself 10 years from now?

D: Happily married and a successful businessman.

What do you miss about your past?

D: The privacy.

How do you manage not to lose yourself in show biz?

D: My family and the people from Talent Center help me keep my feet on the ground.

Reliving college days

I IMMENSELY enjoyed being a guest speaker at UP Diliman's College of Mass Communication, with respected sportscaster **Sev Sarmenta.**

I was invited by my longtime friend **Ambet Nabus** (vice president external of UP-CMC Alumni Association). Sev and I gave the keen-eyed students some tips for effective media practice.

After our speech, there was a lively open forum. It felt so good to be back in my alma mater. In my speech, I said in jest that I'm thankful that UP hasn't revoked my cum laude diploma inspite of all the crazy show biz scandals I've been embroiled in through the years. I must say that I owe it to UP for honing my spunky nature.

It was such a joy to be around brilliant young students. What a privilege it was to be able to expand their minds and provoke their thoughts.

I told them you have to be armed with inspired madness to be able to withstand the pressure of being a show biz press.

An outstanding point in the discussion was a student's query if there is any press association that imposes some guidelines on what can and can't be written about, so as to lessen preposterous controversies.

We do have a Philippine Movie Press Club (PMPC), but the PMPC is also not too particular about what comes out in the show biz headlines.

I told the students there's a thin line between censorship and cramping one's style. Sensationalism is quite ingrained in the system of local show biz. Outscooping each other seems to be the name of the game. And most stars make a conscious effort to outshine his or her rival, be it in a subtle way or blatant display.

After the talk, Ambet and I tried to recapture our UP days by riding a UP ikot jeep to Dilimall, where we bought UP T-shirts as if we were hoarders.

For a moment, I felt like an eager student all over again as Ambet and I laughed non-stop while the ikot jeep took us around the university, which was our haven during our restless years.

I wish I could prolong that feeling, especially when show biz inanities begin to bore me.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com

NOT SPOILED BY FAME. Diether Ocampo plays another challenging role in "Bahid," opposite Assunta de Rossi.

Kyla to jam with UP Jazz Ensemble

THE UP Jazz Ensemble under the baton of professor Rayben Maigue of the UP School of Music, will topbill The World of Music's (TWN) 5 offering at the Shangri-La Mall, Nov. 30.

Guest in the concert is Kyla, best new artist winner of the 2002 Aliw and the 2001 MTV Pilipinas Awards.

Hailed as one of the hottest and most promising female singers in the local scene today, Kyla has released her first album, "Way To Your Heart," said to be one of the first authentic R&B albums to emerge from the local music scene.

Kyla will be in the company of jazz maker Angel Peña, who arranged the two Pinoy jazz compositions to be performed by the UP Jazz Ensemble. One song is the brand-new composition by Richie Quito, "Basilan." Peña's masterful arrangement fuses Filipino indigenous rhythms with Europe classical and avant-garde techniques and American big band techniques.

The UP Jazz Ensemble, the country's longest-existing jazz band, will also treat the TWM patrons to dazzling interpretations of compositions by music greats such as Duke Ellington's "Caravan," George Gershwin's "Fascinating Rhythm," Chuck Mangione's "Feel So Good," and Miami Sound Machine's Best of Gloria Estefan.

Now on its 5th season, TWM 5 is presented this year by No Curfew with Shangri-La Plaza Corporation.

No Curfew is a youth-oriented watch shop which recently opened at the 5th Level of Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

Co-presentors are Citizen, United Colors of Benetton Watches, Oxbow of France, Tom Tailor of Germany, Circa, OHM Sports, Tissot Swiss Watches and Pagliacci Ristoranti Sapore Italiano.

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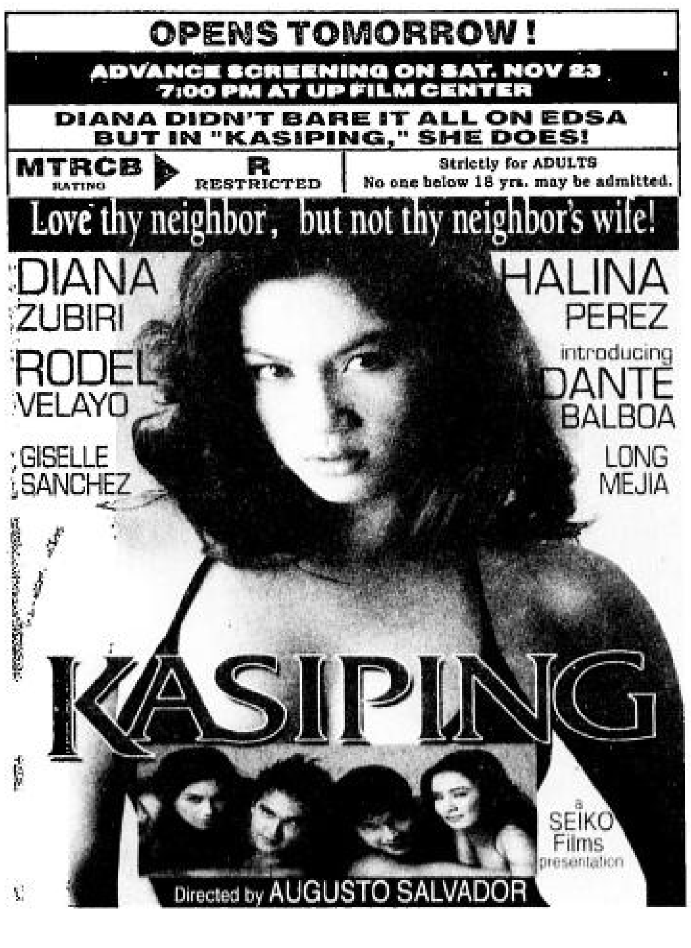

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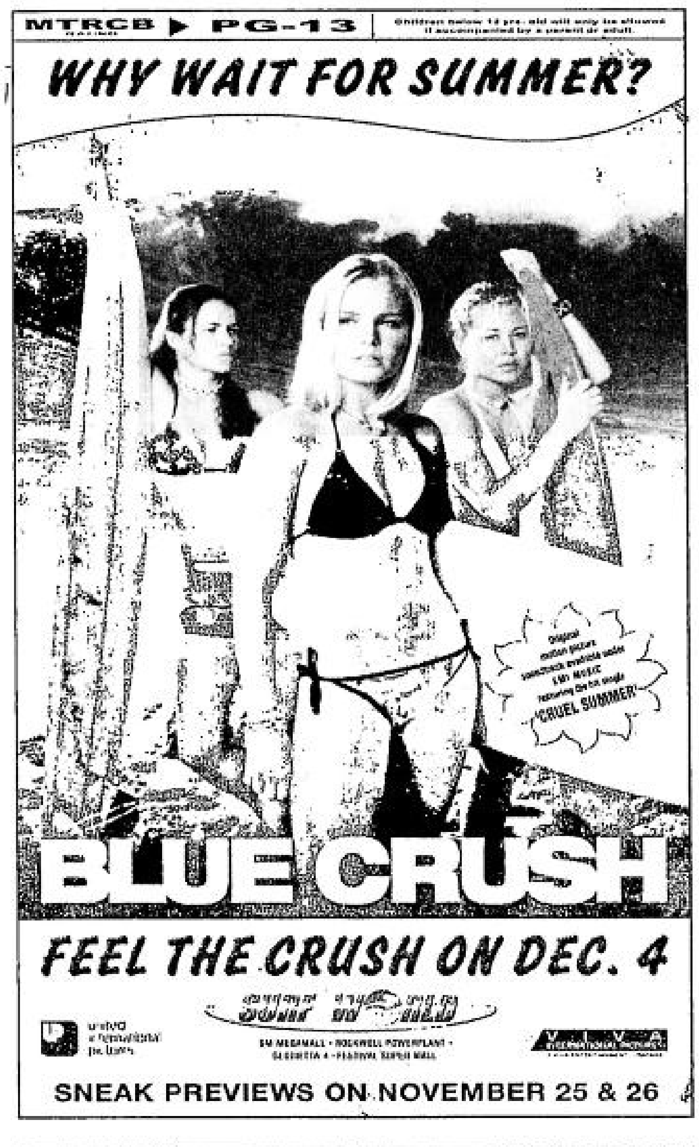

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Si Maui Taylor bilang CLARA
Si Ricky Davao bilang ROMAN
Si Rica Peralejo bilang ISABEL
Inosente. Mapagtiwala.
Gaano kaya niya katagal mapananatili ang maayos at simple niyang buhay?
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Farmers 2	HARRY POTTER 2
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QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
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CINEMA-7	MASARAP NA PUGAD
CINEMA-8	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	CLOCK STOPPERS
CINEMA-12	HIBLA
CINEMA-14	BARZEN WOMEN
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E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

WIDE-EYED ALLURE. Rica Peralejo plays the sexually clueless lass.

'HIBLA'

A carefully woven tale of lust

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

"A QUIET love quadrangle set in a pastoral location."

That's what the photocopied MTRCB sheet posted at the ticket booth says about Yam Laranas' fourth film, "Hibla."

That's an interesting way to put it, and I agree. Hibla, fiber or thread in English, refers in this case to the interweaving lives of four people who affect each other's lives dramatically, as if by some unseen designated pattern.

Childhood friends Clara (Maui Taylor) and Isabel (Rica Peralejo) reunite after a decade in the peaceful rural town where they spent time as kids in innocent bliss.

Clara and her father Roman (Ricky Davao) adapt pretty quickly to their old habitat. While trying to recover from the emotionally draining death of his wife, Roman tries to find some new purpose away from the complications of an urban cityscape with his supportive daughter.

Not long after, the two are introduced to Isabel's boyfriend Lando (Antonio Aquitania), who elicits opposite reactions from both of them.

Clara secretly wants Lando to be her latest quickie conquest, while Roman shows his disdain for the young man because he has the hots for the perpetually braless but chaste quilt-weaver Isabel.

As can be expected, things get out of hand, testing both women's friendship and exploring their capacity for betrayal.

The film is really a simple story, and a fairly predictable one at that, but the screenplay by Edgar Ilao and Quark Henares mesh nicely with Laranas' optically stimulating direction. Everybody knows where the story will lead to— it's a pretty common premise—but the streamlined dialogue had just the necessary precision that doesn't let the whole thing wander into "belabor the obvious" territory.

Characters speak like real persons would, without a need to explain further to the unseen audience. The destination's quite apparent from the start, but the journey was filled with toned-down, lithe touches that make it endurable, and even likeable.

Even if one had no preconceptions about the film or its trailer, it was certain that specific parties would get it on (it's a sex-oriented movie after all), and there would be no secrets left unrevealed through the course of the tale.

The sex-drama also doesn't disappoint with its very few erotic scenes. Okay, there are boobs galore, but the nudity and pseudo-lovemaking scenes were tastefully and artistically done. And the story unfolds at an even pace.

As the sexually clueless lass, Rica Peralejo radiates a typical wide-eyed allure, which isn't hard to digest since she still possesses that permeating "Ang TV" wholesomeness even after having made a few extra-naked bold flicks.

Contrasting her character's maidenly disposition is Maui Taylor's liberated tart, a smart but unceasingly horny city girl role that seems to be a continuation of her "Gamitan" character. Nevertheless, as Clara, she's one of those focused bitches who, as a major gaffe, isn't beyond stealing her dear friend's boyfriend for a fast frigging fix.

The pair of shapely sirens also torridly lock lips, and while it isn't as hot as Sarah Michelle Gellar and Selma Blair's steaming kiss in "Cruel Intentions," it can still give the audience "special feelings" as Beavis and Butthead would say.

This is Clara's way of imparting firsthand knowledge to the inexperienced Isabel. She also dispenses various sexual truths like, "Pangangailangan ng tao ang sex" or "Mahalaga ang galing sa kama."

Clara is a living, breathing self-help sex book for dummies who seriously advises her friend to get laid—and fast!

One of the movie's noteworthy technical aspects is the sound. When a person punches another person (yup, there's some of the usual violence), a pulpy "spkk!" sound is heard, which is a nice, realistic improvement over the thudding "chgg!" sound effects from many local films.

Another notable aspect is the music composed and conducted by Bong Rosario. Foreboding string arrangements add an airy texture of remoteness to majority of the scenes. The poignant quality of the music makes the virginal, grassy landscapes all the more removed from the poking chaos of the rest of the world.

Enticing, wide scenic shots of nature send viewers a-soaring, thanks to the near-perfect cinematography. Somehow, the sight of unspoiled countrysides and rivers fill even the most pessimistic viewers with unabridged hope.

The rich visuals, in that case, help drive almost anyone into spontaneous sentimentality. It certainly is a good thing when the photography steals the show most of the time.

There's nothing overwrought or pretentiously heavy about "Hibla." It's just a good, carefully woven film that lingers long after the much-hyped making-out of the two stars had worn off.

LUCIANO 'CHANING' CARLOS, 1925-2002

To laughter ever after

By Jerome Gomez

TO NIDA Blanca, he was "Sunshine." Whenever he would enter a room, the late actress used to say, he never failed to bring laughter and cheer.

To the rest of the movie industry, even to producer Mother Lily, he was "Tatay Chaning," director, mentor, surrogate father.

Last November 19, just before noon, Luciano "Chaning" Carlos, at 77, joined Blanca in the afterlife, closing the final book on a movie career that had spanned close to half a century.

He died of a sudden attack of bronchopneumonia in Los Angeles.

Premonition

It was as if Carlos had known it was time to go.

Days before his death, according to his daughter Camilla, Carlos said jokingly that he was to be cremated and his ashes scattered in front of Malate Catholic Church.

The remark was strange, if only for the fact that the director had never been sickly and was always in the pinkest of health.

Carlos' body is scheduled to arrive in Manila on Wednesday.

Though he died in LA, Carlos' death was immediately felt here at home by the people he worked with.

Comedian Dolphy, whose RVQ Productions Carlos helped put up, is still declining requests for interviews days after learning of his friend's death.

Jose Javier Reyes, who as a young scriptwriter in the '80s worked in many Carlos movies, packed up work for the rest of the day upon hearing the news.

Maricel Soriano, one of the director's all-time favorite actresses, even until Friday would not agree to face the cameras to talk about her "Tatay Chaning."

Recognition denied

To the rest of the moviegoing public, Carlos was merely a name at the bottom of the billboard—despite the fact that he's done a record 102 movies since the '50s.

He had quietly declared his retirement long a decade ago, long before publicists began making celebrities out of film directors.

Despite his massive ouevre, Carlos was denied the recognition they have shown the likes of Lino Brocka (who wrote "Arizona Kid" which Carlos helmed) and Eddie Romero (the director of "Ang Asawa Kong Amerikana," a Carlos script).

"Ang Asawa" won best screenplay at the Asian Film Festival in 1954 held in Japan.

The film, a comedy about a *probinsyano* who brings his American wife to live with him in the barrio, brought an entire moviehouse of Japanese cineastes rolling with laughter.

Here at home, except for FAMAS best screenplay award for "Bato-bato sa Langit" (1975), the first project that starred Nora Aunor with Christopher de Leon, very little recognition had come his way.

Perhaps that's because in the Philippines, comedy has always played second fiddle to drama. And comedy was his strongest point.

Carlos also worked closely with Dolphy, with whom he made 24 films, including "Facifica Falayfay."

Happy childhood

Laughter was easy for Carlos. As the youngest child (he was a menopausal baby) in a brood of six, he was never made to cry.

His father was a violinist who owned a tailoring shop in Malate. His mother was a dressmaker.

At the Carlos home in Baliuag, Bulacan, where he grew up, there were no quarrels, no cursing and no shouting.

When the INQUIRER visited him last May, he wore the same sunny aura. He was the picture of health, a man of 76 with a lithe figure, grey hair neatly trimmed, a face devoid of worry, contently playing with one his many grandchildren who live in his compound in 5th Street, Cubao.

Early this year, he was honored with a retrospective of his works at the University of the Philippines.

In his 50 years in show biz, Carlos never lost that overwhelming well of happiness that he magically translated to his movies.

"My movie life has been very, very colorful, very, very satisfying, very, very fulfilling," he told the INQUIRER last summer.

And when we asked him how he wanted to be remembered, he quickly replied, "As a good comedy director, that I made people laugh."

CARLOS. He did a record of over a hundred movies since the '50s.

PDI PHOTO

Relive the '70s music and fashion in party-concert

NOTHING is more exciting and thrilling to revive than the era of the '70s.

Remember the shake and move of dance kings John "Tony Madero" Travolta and Denny Terrio.

Or when everyone escaped the Metrocom arrest or beat the Martial Law curfew by staying in fabulous discos like Where Else, Wells Fargo and Reno?

It was the time of great local bands like the Circus and The Hidden Populace, unforgettable singers such as Boy Camara and Sonny Nicolas, unique fashion like Bangband, Faded Glory, Double Knit and Nik-Nik, fabulous music from the '70s icons like Spiral Staircase, Chicago, Santana and Earth, Wind and Fire.

Original "Goin' Bananas" mainstays and current top directors Edgar Mortiz and Al Tantay will revive the sensational decade with a party-concert, "Let's Do It the '70s Way," Nov. 30, Saturday, at Le Pavilion in Roxas Boulevard.

The show will feature Ugoy-Ugoy Band, Q&A, Labuyo and Spirit of '67 bands.

Ariel Ureta, the most popular entertainer in the '70s, will host the event. "Let's Do It the '70s Way" is presented in part by Via Mare, Skechers Sport, RJ-FM and Giorgio Armani Eyewear.

For ticket inquiries, call 891-5610.

Q&A. To sing '70s hits in the retrospective event, "Let's Do It the '70s Way."

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TUESDAY,
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

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BUSINESS

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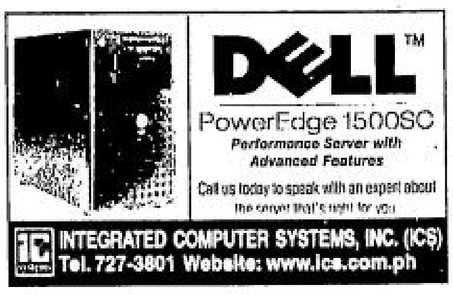

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T-bill rates drop on heavy demand

By Clarissa S. Batino

BANKS yesterday swarmed the sale of the benchmark 91-day treasury bills and offered to buy P12.65 billion worth of the three-month notes, pushing the yield down by 12.7 basis points to 5.193 percent.

The rate of the six-month treasuries also fell by two basis points to 6.469 percent while the one-year debt notes rose by 9.9 basis points to 7.189 percent.

The government gave a full award of P3.5 billion for the 91-day, P3 billion for 182-day and P2.5 billion for 364-day bills on total tenders of P20.256 billion, of which P3.69 billion were for the six-month papers and P3.915 billion were for one-year treasuries.

Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said the fixed-income market seemed unaffected by the outlook downgrade made by Fitch Ratings on sovereign instruments.

Mendiola said any negative impact of the Fitch decision was lost on a market awash with cash. Banks and investors still preferred the risk-free government securities over the stock market while loans to the private sector had remained anemic.

Based on the schedule, the government will hold only one auction each for treasury bills and bonds in December although there are still chances that these last schedules would be scrapped.

Today, the government will sell two-year bonds.

Mendiola believed the rates on treasury bills would likely end the year at yesterday's levels. "I do not see any drastic changes in the rates in the coming auctions unless something earthshaking happens."

Traders said the bad news from the local front like the Fitch downgrade and the rising budget deficit, which stood at P187.6 billion as of October, were the reasons for the shift to shorter-end notes.

From now until December, a little over P10 billion in 91-day notes are maturing and the new funds competed with the excess liquidity in the market.

Mendiola said the Treasury might decide to open an over-the-counter facility after the auction, judging from the huge demand for the three-month papers whose yield is used by banks in pricing their loans.

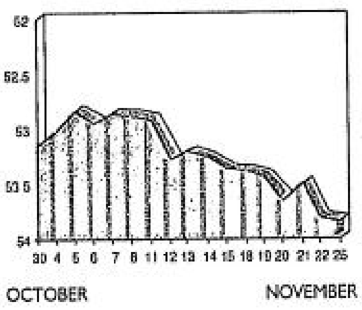
The Treasury yesterday reiterated that it had enough cash to finance a deficit of up to about P220 billion or close to the government's new target of P223 billion or 5.6 percent of gross domestic product.

Traders admitted that the fixed-income market had limited options for investments and banks were forced to place their funds in government securities despite the low interest.

The market's excess liquidity had offset the impact of the growing fiscal slippage that normally pushes interest rates up.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 53.85 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Nov. 25, 2002

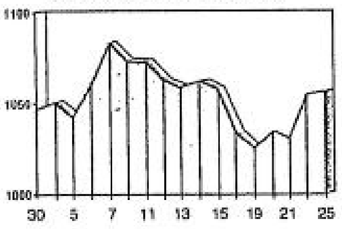
¥ 122.72 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Nov. 25, 2002

GOLD: $320.40 / 320.90
per ounce Hong Kong, Nov. 25, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Shares up slightly

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed 0.1 percent higher yesterday, lifted by a rise in blue chip PLDT, brokers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 1.61 points to 1,056.41. On Friday, the index posted its biggest rise in more than three months as investors snapped up oversold stocks in anticipation of a pre-Christmas rally.

Analysts said there was little reaction to news that London-based ratings firm Fitch downgraded its outlook on the Philippines to negative from stable on concerns over the country's fiscal position.

"There was just selective buying in a few issues, with the rest thinly traded," Manny Cruz of Belson Securities said.

"It was mostly technical buying in a few stocks, including PLDT, that are seen offering value at current levels," said Citisecurities research head April Lee-Tan.

Volume turnover fell to 58.692 million shares worth P245.24 million from 96.79 million shares worth P364.65 million on Friday.

PLDT rose P15 to P285. It was the stock's highest close since Sept. 27. It had slumped to 11-year lows last quarter during an ownership row between controlling shareholder First Pacific Co. Ltd. and the company's management. But it has staged a rebound, gaining 32 percent since Oct. 23 as investors have been attracted by its relatively low share price, improved debt profile and strong earnings for the first nine months. *AFP, Reuters*

DTI cautious over outlook of garments exports

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

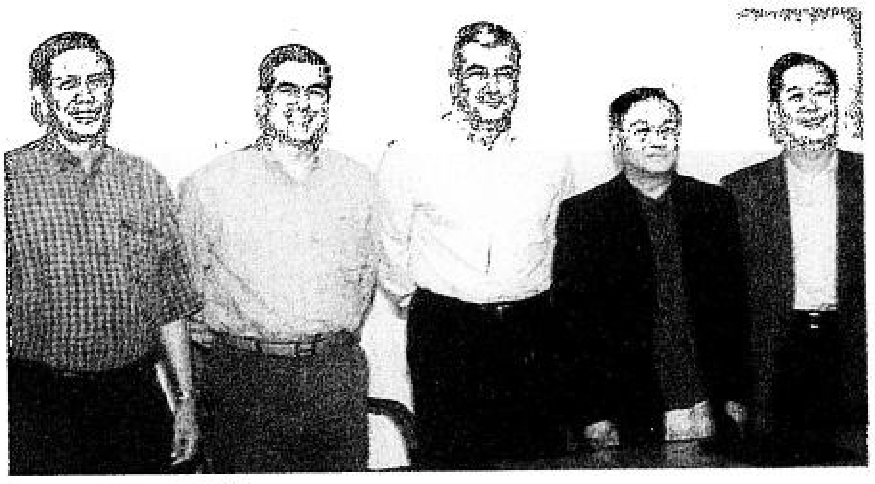
THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has expressed concern over the future of the country's garments and textile exports, citing signs that demand abroad may be weakening.

In an interview yesterday, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the economies of the country's major trading partners—the United States and Japan—showed signs of weakening in the third quarter.

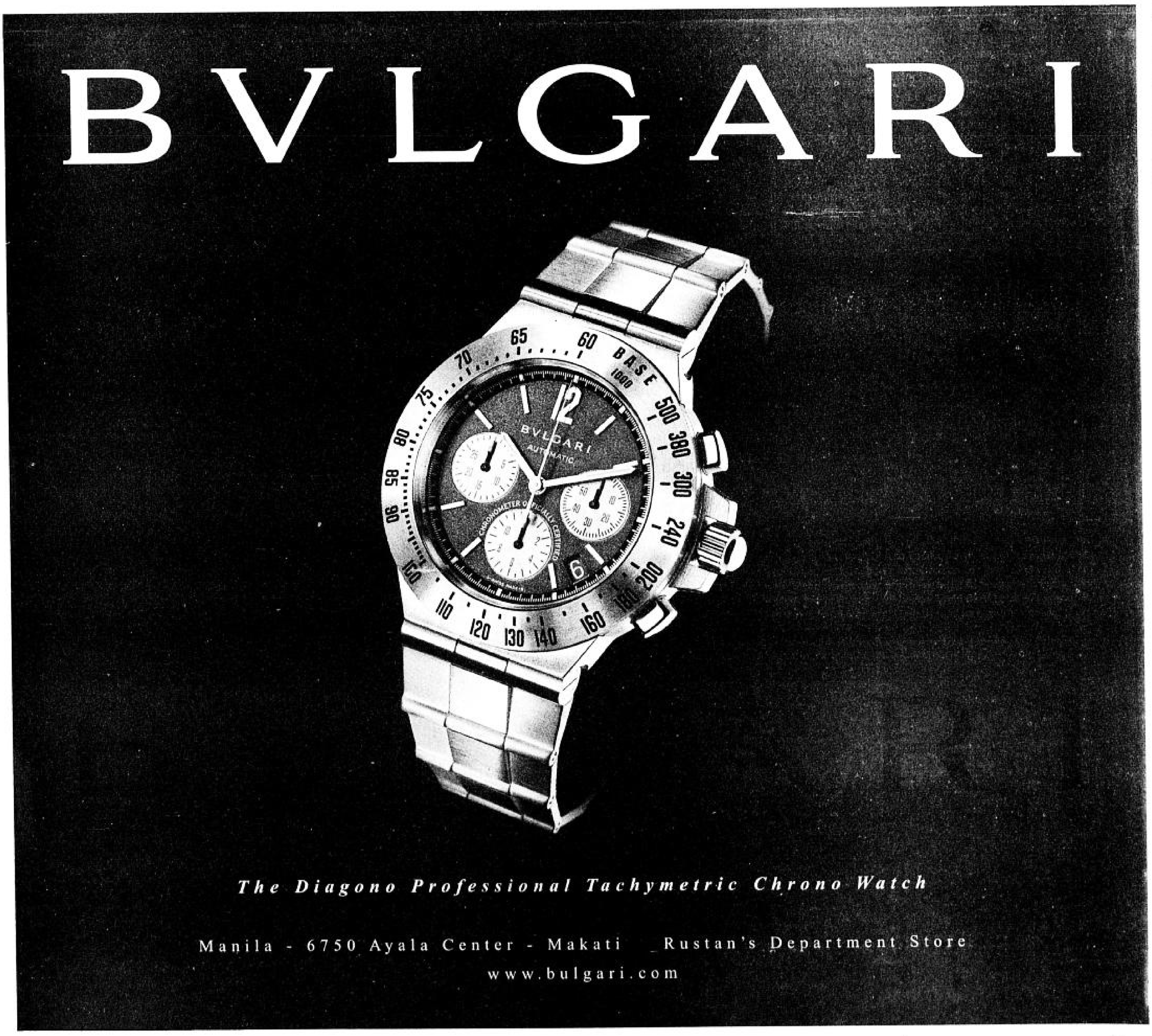
Roxas said this development could dampen demand for apparel and fabric in these countries that could, in turn, hit the Philippines' garments and textile exporters.

He said he remained cautious despite a

DTI/B2



$90-M BONI PACT
THE PARTNERSHIP between Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) and the Campos group signed on Saturday a $90-million agreement with Metro Pacific Corp., effectively giving the partners control of Bonifacio Land Co. and a firm hold on the prime Fort Bonifacio property. At the signing of the agreement are (from left): ALI president Francisco Licuanan III, ALI vice chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, ALI chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala, MPC chair Manuel Pangilinan and Unilab chair Joselito Campos Jr.



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PNOC subsidiary spins off gov't stake in Malampaya

By Doris C. Dumlao

SHAREHOLDERS of the state-owned PNOC Exploration Corp. approved on Friday the spin-off of a 10-percent interest in the $2-billion Malampaya natural gas consortium, a move toward the eventual listing of the government's stake on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

In a disclosure to the PSE yesterday, PNOC-EC corporate secretary Elpidio Gamboa Jr. said the company's shareholders, in a special meeting last Friday, voted to assign the 10-percent interest in the Malampaya service contract to wholly owned subsidiary PNOC Malampaya Production Corp.

The assignment of shares also included all obligations under related contracts as well as all or a portion of it associated debt, Gamboa said.

Likewise approved on Friday was a management contract between PNOC-EC and PNOC Malampaya Production Corp.

This spin-off is part of the government's plan to sell shares in the Malampaya project to the public through the initial public offering of the subsidiary, a move which is not only expected to raise about $400 million for the government coffers but help boost the sluggish stock market.

ING-Barings is acting as PNOC-EC's adviser on the privatization plan.

PNOC-EC itself has been listed on the PSE since 1977 but has never sold shares to the public. The government's Philippine National Oil Corp. owns 99.76 percent of PNOC-EC, whose other projects include the San Antonio gas field in Cagayan Valley and offshore exploration in the Cotabato Basin, Maiguin, Ragay Gulf and Babuyan Channel.

UK-based Royal Dutch/Shell operates the Malampaya gas project with a stake of 45 percent, with the remaining 45 percent owned by US-based Chevron Texaco.

Ayala Land, Campos group seen getting 28 ha of Fort Boni

AYALA Land Inc. and Greenfield Development Corp. will each get about 14 hectares in net saleable land in the Bonifacio Global City after gaining control of 50.4 percent of Bonifacio Land Corp.

This was disclosed yesterday by a top official of MPC, noting that based on latest figures, the total available net saleable land in the Fort Bonifacio Global City was 57 ha.

Based on the deal signed on Saturday, MPC will directly own 10.4 ha of the remaining land while the Ayala-Campos tandem will get 50.4 percent of BLC, equivalent to 28.3 ha.

Equally divided between ALI and GDC, the official said the 50.4-percent stake will thus yield about 14 ha each for the two companies.

The entry of the ALI-GDC venture will dilute MPC's stake in BLC from 73 percent to about 23 percent.

For its part, MPC, aside from directly owning 10.4 hectares of the remaining saleable land, will indirectly own some more parcels of land through its diluted 23-percent stake in BLC.

"If you take the 10.4 hectares that MPC will own directly plus 23 percent of BLC we will own, we will get a total of 13.11 hectares," the official said.

"MPC will remain among the largest landowner in the Bonifacio Global City, though we won't have majority control of FBDC (Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.)," the official added.

BLC owns 55 percent of FBDC, the joint venture with the state-owned Bases Conversion Development Authority, which privatized development rights to the former military camp in 1995.

"ALI-GDC will infuse funds, develop the project further while MPC's holdings will appreciate in value faster," the official explained.

The ALI-GDC venture is set to pay $90 million in upfront cash for the 50.4-percent stake in BLC upon the closing of the deal with MPC sometime in January. The deal effectively settles the principal amount of a loan owed by MPC to parent firm First Pacific Co. Ltd. through Larouge BV, freeing the 50.4-percent stake in BLC from mortgage.

Aside from the $90-million takeout of the Larouge loan, the ALI-GDC tandem likewise provided P800 million in refinancing facility for the upscale Bonifacio Ridge condominium project located on a 4.1-hectare property in the Global City.

Yesterday, ALI also disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the agreement provided for the pledge of more than 5 percent of BLC's unencumbered shares to ALI and GDC as security for contingent liabilities and breach of representations and warranties.

As part of the agreement, ALI and GDC will also advance P280 million to finance the cost to be incurred in BLC's debt-restructuring program, the disclosure said.

MPC will also assign to the joint venture an additional P655 million in BLC notes currently owed to MPC. As the deal will cover only the principal loan of $90 million, MPC will seek a restructuring of about $23 million in accured interest owed to Larouge. *Doris C. Dumlao*

DTI . . .

From page B1

slowdown in the garments and textile sector's export decline.

The Garments and Textile Export Board reported that exports dropped to $2.411 billion from January to October this year from $2.537 billion in the same period last year.

Exports to the United States, which accounted for 74 percent of total shipments, fell to $1.778 billion in the first 10 months of the year from $1.933 billion a year earlier.

The poor performance of garments and textile exports—the country's biggest export commodity next to electronics—contrasted sharply with a 9-percent increase in overall Philippine exports to $26 billion in the first nine months of the year.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, November 25, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.5	33,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	40.5	40.5	38.5	38.5	785,800
China Banking Corp.	615	615	615	615	20
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26	26	26	26	106,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	32	31	31.5	250,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	10	10	10	10	14,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	5,900
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1310	1325	1310	1325	9,310
Sun Life Financial Serv.	930	935	930	930	1,900
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Diversified Fin. Network	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.39	0.42	0.39	0.42	4,910,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	410	412.5	410	412.5	3,120
Ipeople Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	20,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.012	0.014	0.012	0.014	7,600,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.225	0.23	0.22	0.23	230,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	277.5	292.5	277.5	285	189,820
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.01	8,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	10	10.25	10	10.25	22,200
Manila Electric Co. B	11.75	12	11.25	11.75	2,131,700
Petron Corp.	1.6	1.66	1.6	1.64	1,949,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.42	312,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.16	2.2	2.16	2.2	104,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15	15	14.75	15	293,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34	34.5	34	34.5	74,500
RFM Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58	58.5	58	58	45,900
San Miguel Corp. B	64.5	64.5	64	64.5	86,800
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.9	5	4.9	4.95	3,479,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	1,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	60,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	5,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	10,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.14	330,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	1,620,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	30,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	11.25	11.25	11	11	404,500
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	500,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	11,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	250,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.225	3,140,000
Music Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	500,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	190,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	700,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	570,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Jollibee Warrants	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	13,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.1	5,792,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	450,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.11	0.115	0.11	0.115	210,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	780,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.93	0.94	0.93	0.94	1,770,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.94	1.94	110,000
City & Land Developers	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	12,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	750,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	10,000
SM Development Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.4	5,502,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	88,000
OIL					
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	3,400,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,229,230	56,301,125.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	38,370,340	126,858,050.00
PRO	15,437,000	61,674,060.00
Mining	88,000	105,600.00
OIL	3,500,000	98,600.00
GRAND TOTALS :	58,624,570	245,037,435.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	394.60	DOWN 5.42
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,485.13	UP 10.16
PRO	469.61	UP 0.03
Mining	1,076.20	DOWN 2.94
OIL	1.27	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	645.12	UP 8.55
Composite	1,056.41	UP 1.61

NO. OF ADVANCES: 20; NO. OF DECLINES: 17; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 32; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 69; NO. OF TRADES: 1,514

DISCLOSURES

FORTUNE Cement Corp. announced the resignation of Edgardo Pajao and Rose Marie King as director and corporate secretary, respectively. Bi Yong Chungunco was elected corporate secretary and corporate information officer while Angela Edralin was elected assistant corporate secretary and officer-in-charge who will be authorized to act in the absence of Chungunco.

***

REPUBLIC Cement Corp. announced the resignation of Gilbert Garcia as director and first vice president of the company. Rose Marie King also resigned as corporate secretary. Bi Yong Chungunco was elected corporate secretary and corporate information officer. Gerrard Paez was elected assistant corporate secretary and officer-in-charge in the absence of Chungunco.

***

BALABAC Resources and Holdings Co. Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Jan. 14, 4 p.m. at the Turf Room of Manila Polo Club, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Dec. 6 shall be entitled to vote at the meeting.

***

UNION Cement Corp. has disclosed that after its tender offer to acquire the remaining common shares of Alsons Cement Corp., its ownership of ALC shall be 98.61 percent.

***

ATOK-Big Wedge Co. Inc. has changed the date of its annual stockholders' meeting to every fourth Friday of July.

***

VICTORIAS Milling Co. Inc. shall hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 16, 8:30 a.m. at the Metropolitan Club Inc., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Nov. 29 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

Nov. 25, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.002707	1	53.669
Japan	Yen	0.008165	0.008143	0.437
United Kingdom	Pound	1.584478	1.5802	84.8078
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.12858	0.128233	6.8821
Switzerland	Franc	0.678927	0.677094	36.339
Canada	Dollar	0.63543	0.633714	34.0108
Singapore	Dollar	0.567046	0.565515	30.3506
Australia	Dollar	0.565129	0.563603	30.248
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.659771	2.65259	142.3619
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.267382	0.26666	14.3114
Brunei	Dollar	0.565224	0.563698	30.2531
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000111	0.000111	0.006
Thailand	Baht	0.02313	0.023068	1.238
UAE	Dirham	0.273001	0.272264	14.6121
Euro	Euro	1	0.9973	53.5241
Argentina	Peso	0.286488	0.285714	15.334
Brazil	Real	0.280477	0.27972	15.0123
Denmark	Kroner	0.1347	0.134336	7.2097
India	Rupee	0.020837	0.020781	1.1153
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.263906	0.263193	14.1253
Mexico	New Peso	0.099102	0.098834	5.3043
New Zealand	Dollar	0.504355	0.502993	26.9951
Norway	Kroner	0.137019	0.136649	7.3338
Pakistan	Rupee	0.017213	0.017167	0.9213
South Africa	Rand	0.105931	0.105645	5.6699
Korea	Won	0.000834	0.000832	0.0447
Sweden	Kroner	0.111275	0.110975	5.9559
Syria	Pound	0.01947	0.019417	1.0421
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.028971	0.028893	1.5507
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000753	0.000751	0.0403

GOLFERS CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF NOV. 25, 2002

		SELLING	BUYING
1.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"		1,400,000
2.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,500,000	
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17.	LUISITA GOLF CLUB	350,000	
18	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250,000	230,000
19.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	270,000	250,000
20	MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	10,500,000	10,200,000
21.	MANILA GOLF CLUB (CORP)	13,000,000	
22.	MANILA POLO CLUB	2,600,000	2,400,000
23.	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	580,000	550,000
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25.	METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	100,000	
26.	METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	180,000	
27	MT MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)		350,000
28.	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A" "B" "C"	Pls. call	Pls. call
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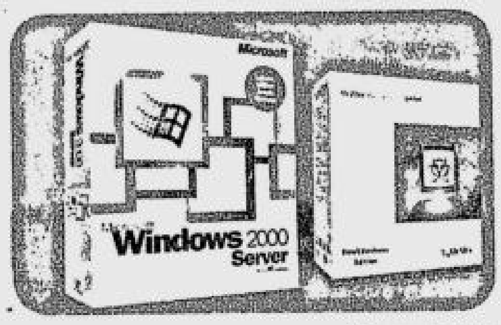

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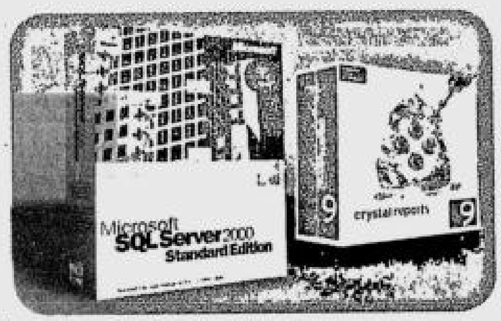

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ILIJAN PLANT

Napocor, Korean group OK deal

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A COMPROMISE settlement between National Power Corp. and Kepco Ilijan Co. (Keilco) had slashed the expected fines for the delay in the Ilijan plant's commercial operation by half from $38.4 million to $19 million.

Napocor had initially fined Keilco $400,000 a day for each day of delay in the 1,200-megawatt plant's commercial operation, which was targeted for Jan. 2, 2002.

The Korean Power Corp.-led consortium was able to go commercial only last June 5.

Napocor computed net damages of 96 days by deducting excusable delays which were caused by transmission line delays, plant blockade, gas unavailability and dispatch interruptions.

According to Napocor documents, its board of directors approved in July a settlement scheme where Keilco indicated its willingness to settle Napocor's liquidated damages by waiving payments for capacity recovery fees for only 69 days.

Napocor had argued that the delay was due to plant-related technical problems and that Keilco was not entitled to a time extension.

On the other hand, Keilco maintained that it was caused by another delay in the completion of the transmission lines for the $710-million Ilijan plant.

The consortium also argued that it was entitled to a time extension if it was prevented, hindered or delayed by Napocor's failure to perform its contractual obligation.

Napocor acting president Roland Quilala said both firms saw the negative implication of a long and drawn-out arbitration case and agreed to bring the issue to a close.

"We were coming from opposite ends of the discussion so the only way out for the impasse is to meet halfway," Quilala said.

The resulting penalty was pegged at $275,000 a day because Keilco said liquidated damages should be based on its energy sales to Manila Electric Co.

Appeals court bars RTC on San Miguel Foods case

THE COURT of Appeals issued last Friday an order to the Pasig City Regional Trial Court (RTC) stopping the implementation of a temporary restraining order (TRO) on former employees of Pure Foods Corp. and from further taking action on the case.

In an earlier order by the lower court, the employees were prevented from "continuing employment of engagement with Bounty Agro Ventures Inc. and/or Tyson Agro Ventures."

In a resolution, the appellate court ordered the lower court to cease and desist from executing or enforcing the questioned TRO dated Nov. 12, 2002, in Civil Case No. 69055.

The ruling also prohibited the lower court from further taking action on the case.

Last July, several former Pure Foods employees filed a labor complaint against San Miguel Foods Inc./San Miguel Corp. with the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) for alleged unpaid benefits and separation pay.

Subsequently, the SMFI filed a case against several of the complainants with the Pasig RTC, which issued the TRO.

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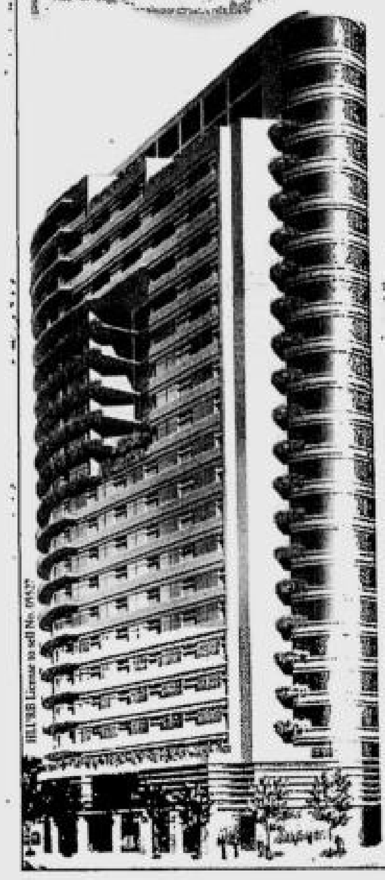

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WRECKED BUDGET, DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Taxing times for Philippines as revenues slump

SELDOM is there such widespread agreement about the most pressing problem facing an economy as the consensus that the Philippines must reverse a slide in tax revenues that is wrecking its budget and its development goals.

Fitch Ratings lowered yesterday its outlook of the Philippines' credit rating to negative, citing a seemingly relentless decline in the tax take that it said had undermined the government's credibility and fanned concerns about rising debts.

But, ominously for the public finances, economists are also unanimous in expecting little improvement in cracking down on tax evasion or widening the tax base ahead of the 2004 elections.

"There's less enthusiasm to push for this now because the attitude of the parties is not to hurt anybody at this point, not to displease potential donors and supporters," said Mario Lamberte, president of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies in Manila.

Behind Fitch's gloom was Thursday's government admission that its deficit this year was likely to reach 5.6 percent of gross domestic product, dwarfing an initially budgeted 3.3 percent, and that the Bureau of Internal Revenue had once again fallen short of its tax-collection targets in October.

Tom Crouch, head of the Asian Development Bank's Philippine country office, said the deterioration was particularly disappointing because the government had earned plaudits by keeping a solid grip on its budget last year.

"The deficit story is one of missed opportunity, so what kicks in now is a perception of the government's credibility and capacity to deliver," Crouch said.

A financial diplomat agreed: "It makes you wonder what will happen in the year before an election. It's a real concern."

TAXPAYERS submit their requirements to a Bureau of Internal Revenue officer in Makati. Because of lower-than-expected tax collections, the budget deficit target for this year has been revised to 5.6 percent of gross domestic product, or P223 billion, well above the original full-year target of P130 billion. A blowout in the budget deficit has forced the government to raise its deficit ceiling for 2002 and 2003. AFP

The government rushed to reassure investors that fiscal discipline and associated reforms remained a priority.

"We all know that this is a tough nut to crack but our persistence and determination . . . will pay off in the medium term as we work toward more sustainable growth in the country's tax collection base," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said.

If there is a silver lining to the Philippines' predicament, it is that the overshoot is squarely due to a shortfall of revenues. Spending has not exploded.

While spending has fluctuated between 19 and 20 percent of GDP, revenues have fallen from a peak of 19.1 percent in 1997 to a projected 13.9 percent this year, according to Fitch.

And the problem, though getting worse again, is not new.

During the 1965-1986 military rule of President Ferdinand Marcos, tax collection averaged just 11.5 percent of GDP, little more than half of what Daniel Lian of Morgan Stanley Lian estimated the government could collect.

"The country's tax revenue effort has been appalling for the past few decades," Lian said in a recent report.

As a result, the country has gone deep into debt and has long underinvested in social services. "Poor tax collection has been central to the lack of economic development and restructuring inertia for the country for many decades," Lian wrote.

The government has to devote nearly 30 percent of its budget to debt service. After salaries and transfers to local governments, this leaves at most 20 percent for discretionary spending in areas such as health, education and infrastructure.

"The bottom line is that the country's development effort can't achieve the desired results without this problem being fixed," said Lloyd McKay, lead economist at the World Bank office in Manila, referring to the BIR's underperformance.

Discussion of the Philippines' poor tax record usually dwells on the well-documented problem of "leakage"—jargon for tax evasion and the corruption of some tax inspectors.

But one financial diplomat said this explained only one-third of the slump in revenues since 1997. He attributed another third to cyclical and structural changes in the economy—corporate profits are down—and the remainder to changes in tax policy, including a commendable reduction in tariffs.

Reuters

Organized labor seeks higher tariffs on plastics

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE NATIONAL Federation of Labor Unions is pushing for an increase in tariffs on plastic products to prevent a surge in imports and layoffs.

Naflu president and Plastics Unions Labor Alliance convenor Wilfredo de la Cruz said his group has urged the Plastics Industries Association to file a petition with the Tariff Commission to increase duties on finished plastic products to 15 percent, or at par with the current duty on resins—the main input of plastic production.

Naflu is one of the country's biggest labor organizations with 15,000 members.

Naflu's position is in sharp contrast with the PPIA's.

PPIA wants the government to continue with the programmed reduction in resins or polymers from 15 to 5 percent to resolve the distortion on plastic imports, where raw materials are slapped higher duties—15 percent—than finished products.

Local resin makers belonging to the Association of Petrochemical Manufacturers Association of the Philippines have also advocated for a hike in finished plastic products in line with their petition to maintain at 15 percent duties on polymers.

De la Cruz said, however, that if duties on finished plastic products were allowed to fall, the finished plastic product makers would opt to import their goods rather than produce them here.

De la Cruz said the downstream industry would become mere traders rather than manufacturers.

Since the government has decided to invoke the Asean protocol to delay the cut in petrochemical tariffs from 15 to 5 percent next year, De la Cruz said the PPIA should now push for higher duties on finished plastic products.

De la Cruz said Naflu would not allow massive layoff in the industry from a tariff reduction on petrochemicals that would only benefit importers and foreign manufacturers.

SEC advises public to report get-rich rackets involving shares, investments

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission is advising the public to report any get-rich quick scheme that involves shares or investments.

In a primer on the "dos and don'ts" for investors, the SEC also urged the public to contact it to confirm whether a company or individual is properly licensed to conduct its business and has no history of violating the law.

For this purpose, the SEC has established a "Scams" hotline with phone numbers 725-8260 and 725-3418. Its public information and assistance hotline is 725-4118 and email address is mis@sec.gov.ph.

In the primer, the SEC advised the public to be wary of unexpected telephone calls, letters or even personal visits from people offering quick-profit schemes that require immediate investment.

Also, the corporate watchdog cautioned the public against seminars that make the following claims: "You can become a millionaire in three years"; "Traditional investments are too slow and lack excitement"; and, "You can turn your financial dreams into reality."

"Don't get sucked in by glossy brochures or over-the-top testimonies from past customers," the SEC said.

Also, it added, avoid salespeople who pressure you into investing or borrowing money, promise high returns with no explanation of risk or promise access to secret or exclusive techniques for building wealth.

Investors should also be suspicious of "inside information," hot tips and rumors that supposedly will give a big advantage over other, less knowledgeable investors.

"Be wary of schemes that give emphasis on recruitment of members or 'downlines,' particularly if the product being offered is overpriced as the same may be a disguised pyramiding scheme," the SEC said.

NAIA 3 general manager Guillermo Cunanan presides over a briefing for the Makati Business Club and Management Association of the Philippines. Citing significant safety and security issues, President Macapagal has upheld Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza's suggestion that the opening of the new terminal be put off again. The terminal was originally scheduled to open today, but shareholder issues led to its deferment for Dec. 15. ROGER MARGALLO

Meralco saves P500M from deal

THE MANILA Electric Co. generated more than P500 million in savings from the purchase of power from independent power producer Duracom Mobile Power Corp. from January 2000 to April 2002.

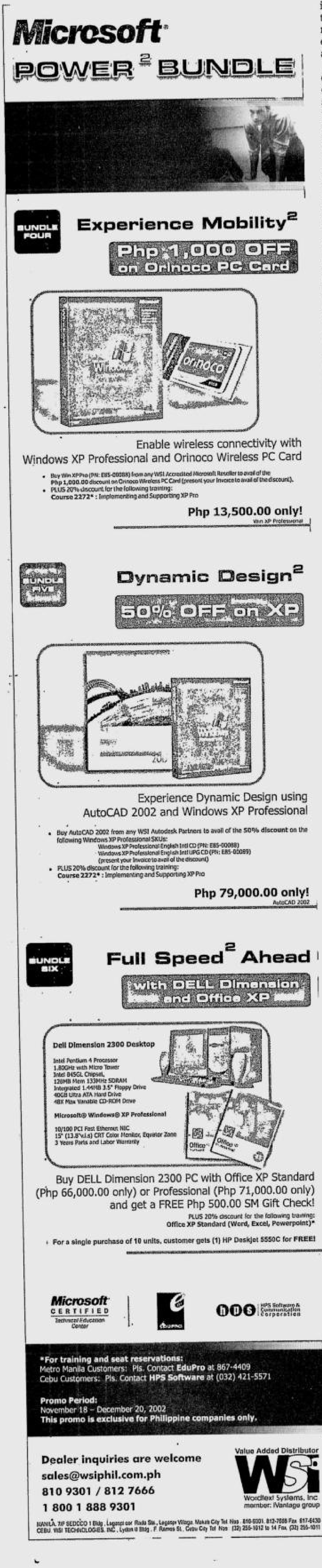
This was bared by former National Power Corp. president Jesus Alcordo, as he debunked allegations that he had anything to do with the alleged overcharging by Meralco due to its power purchase agreement with Duracom.

"I was really puzzled by reports linking me to this controversy when, as Napocor president, I definitely had nothing to do with any agreement between the two private companies," Alcordo said when asked to comment on the alleged overprice.

"And what's even more puzzling is that some quarters traced the supposedly Meralco overcharge to this transaction when it is clear as day that Meralco generated huge savings from this purchase agreement," he added.

Based on historical effective rates of Napocor and Duracom, Meralco only paid an average of P3.43 per kilowatt-hour for power bought from Duracom during the review period against the average P3.63 per kwh effective selling rate of Napocor at the time. This amounts to savings of about an average P0.20 per kWh for Meralco.

Alcordo reiterated that he had completely divested himself from East Asia Diesel Power Corp. which owns 40 percent of DMPC when he was appointed as president of Napocor.



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PSE, Sun Life ink contract to issue mutual funds

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange signed yesterday a memorandum of agreement with Sun Life Asset Management Co. for the distribution of mutual funds through the local bourse.

The agreement will pave the way for the eventual listing of Sun Life mutual funds on the stock exchange, targeted sometime in the first half of 2003, when restrictions in the Revised Investment Company Act are expected to be eased through congressional amendments.

In a news briefing, PSE chair Vivian Yuchengco said the new mutual fund facility would give the public more solid investment opportunities, especially amid the proliferation of investment scams in the country.

She also disclosed that the stock exchange had started discussions with another insurance giant, the Philippine-American Insurance group, on a similar arrangement.

The agreement initially involves the distribution of mutual funds through the exchange where trading participants will act as distributors and their selling agents as investment solicitors of mutual funds.

On the other hand, Sun Life's Prosperity Funds is a family of mutual funds composed of the Prosperity Bond Fund, the Prosperity Balanced Fund and the Prosperity Philippine Equity Fund.

Launched in April 2000, these mutual funds now have about P3 billion worth of assets under management.

PSE president Ernest Leung said the new mutual fund facility would be suitable to investors "who may not have the time to manage their own funds."

An investor will have to earmark a minimum of P10,000 to invest in Sun Life's mutual funds.

Sun Life Asset Management chair Esther Tan said: "What we are fostering is a culture of savings and investment."

Under the agreement between Sun Life and PSE, the PSE shall establish a price reporting system for the computed net asset value of the funds distributed. The NAVs shall be posted on the exchange's electronic board and included in the quotation report on a daily basis.

This interim arrangement is preparatory to the eventual listing and trading of mutual funds in order to expand the range of securities being traded in the PSE.

Sun Life, for its part, shall provide the product and sales training, tools, materials and information concerning the mutual funds being offered for distribution. It will likewise design the training modules for a continuing education program for trading participants.

Last October, Sun Life has started conducting trainings to prepare the representatives of interested trading participants for the Investment Companies Representative Certification exam of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Out of 166 examinees, 109 passed the SEC exam, automatically qualifying these as investment solicitors and distributors of mutual funds.

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Manila Water predicts 'modest' income growth

By Christine A. Gaylican

MANILA Water Co. Inc. said yesterday that it was expecting "modest" revenue growth by year's end.

Manila Water, one of two companies distributing water in Metro Manila, estimated that its profits this year would surpass last year's P170 million.

Manila Water is part of the Ayala group of companies.

Despite the peso's steep depreciation, Manila Water has been chalking up earnings over the last two years, unlike its twin concessionaire, Maynilad Water Services Inc. of the Lopez family.

Manila Water reported an income of P123 million in 2000.

Manila Water president Antonino Aquino said the company's earnings were on the back of fiscal prudence and new customers.

"The reduction in our NRWs (non-revenue water) translated to a steady cash flow base for Manila Water," Aquino said.

The company's capital spending significantly brought down its losses from pilferage and wastage from 63 percent in 1997 to 53 percent as of November this year, Aquino said.

Manila Water's outstanding capital stood at around P2.5 billion this year.

Aquino said the financial relief given by the government in the form of tariff adjustments enhanced Manila Water's viability and credit standing with its creditors.

Manila Water has secured a $20-million loan from a group of banks to finance its expansion and network rehabilitation program this year.

Smart signs deal to use 'ICQ' services from AOL

By Abigail L. Ho

EVEN without a computer, real-time communication between Smart Communications Inc.'s almost eight million subscribers and their loved ones all over the world is now possible.

Smart recently signed an agreement with America Online Inc.'s online communications community, ICQ—short for "I Seek You"—which would enable its subscribers to send and receive instant messages using their SMS (short messaging service)-enabled handsets.

Under the agreement, Smart's subscribers can avail themselves of four types of ICQ services: ICQ two-way SMS, ICQ for SMS, ICQ for WAP (wireless access protocol) and GPRS (general packet radio service), and ICQ for J2ME (Java 2 Micro Edition).

"We are pleased to welcome Smart's nearly eight million subscribers to ICQ's family of 140 million registered users. By providing quick and easy access to ICQ's powerful suite of services for mobile devices, users will have more ways than ever to stay in touch with their friends and family around the globe," ICQ co-general manager Ariel Yarnitsky said in a statement yesterday.

With ICQ two-way SMS, Smart subscribers can send and receive instant messages to any ICQ user through their SMS-enabled mobile phones.

The ICQ user need not be connected to the ICQ network through a desktop computer as this service could also work for a user connected through a personal digital assistant or a mobile phone.

ICQ users worldwide can also send messages using an ICQ desktop computer, cellular phone or PDA connection to wireless subscribers of more than 170 networks all over the world, including those of Smart.

These ICQ users can also use the ICQ website for their text messaging needs. Recipients of their messages only have to have SMS-enabled handsets to receive these messages and do not need to be ICQ users themselves.

The ICQ for WAP and ICQ for SMS services allow Smart's subscribers to access their ICQ buddy list on their mobile phones.

Quedancor seen lending over ₱2B by year's end

LOANS released by the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp., lending arm of the Department of Agriculture, will likely hit P2 billion this year, slightly higher than last year's P1.18 billion.

Quedancor president Nelson Buenaflor said in a report to Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor that for the first 11 months of the year, the company had already distributed some P1.23 billion in loans to over 53,000 beneficiaries.

Buenaflor said Quedancor could easily surpass the P2-billion loan mark this year, as over P500 million more worth of loan applications from hundreds of borrowers were in the pipeline waiting approval before year's end.

Montemayor said the upsurge in loan borrowings would augur well for the country's agricultural modernization and food security program because it could spur farm and fishery development. These loans were increasingly being availed of by urban and rural folks to fund their food production and food retailing ventures.

"A rise in loan releases is a welcome development because it shows farmers in need of capital to finance their projects are availing themselves of the easy and affordable agricultural credit services we offer," Montemayor said.

Citing data from Quedancor, he said some P245 million of the loans the firm released in the first 11 months of 2002 went to the grains sector directly benefiting some 23,000 rice and corn farmers, including 2,217 farmers participating in the government's hybrid rice program.

Another P50 million went to the livestock and poultry sector, P1.7 million to fisheries (mostly aquaculture), while close to P875 million went to fund various agribusiness projects, food retailing and other livelihood and income generating activities of urban and rural poor borrowers.

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PriceSmart business techniques bring down prices

IN TIMES of economic uncertainties, PriceSmart offers consumers American-style, volume-driven store operations with low prices, quality brand name merchandise and excellent value.

The company, the first foreign retailer to set up shop in the Philippines after the enactment of the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, will open its fourth warehouse in the country at Westgate Center, Alabang, Muntinlupa in November. PriceSmart already has outlets in Fort Bonifacio Global City, Ortigas Extension, Pasig City and Congressional Avenue, Quezon City.

PriceSmart brings to the Philippines its experience of building and operating nearly 30 locations throughout the Caribbean and Central America. State-of-the-art technology is applied to everything from its specialized store design and construction, purchasing and distribution systems, on through operations and management of its warehouses. American-style management, expertise and personnel training techniques are also uniformly applied. These efficiencies result in PriceSmart holding down costs - such savings are always passed on to its members in the form of greater value and lower prices.

"PriceSmart always takes a low-cost approach. Costs are managed through product consolidation, buying in bulk and using the right transportation for each situation," explained Benjamin Woods, PriceSmart senior vice president-Asia.

PriceSmart's team of distribution and transportation specialists streamlines management of the supply chain, using technology and electronic data interchange from vendor to selling outlet. They also make efficient use of the local distribution environment while assisting in the export and import regulations, requirements and procedures.

"Merchandise selection specifically focuses on the needs of our members in the local market place. We look for high-quality products of value that are distributed efficiently and at a low cost," Woods added.

PriceSmart offers everything from fresh produce; beef poultry and pork and a wide selection of groceries to clothes, electronics, business supplies, computer software and hardware, tools, health and beauty aids, sporting goods, toys, home furnishings and much more at low US warehouse prices. PriceSmart represents an alternative for individual consumers, suppliers and small retailers that is in line with their unique needs in selection, package sizing and pricing.

The grand opening of PriceSmart Alabang will be in November. Diamond and Business memberships are now on sale at the Alabang store site, Westgate Center, Alabang, Muntinlupa. Residents of Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Laguna, Cavite, Batangas and Tagaytay may acquire a membership at the special introductory price of P500. This offer will only last for a short time, after which, annual membership will be P700. Sign up early to see why PriceSmart is the right place to shop.

For more information about PriceSmart, call 771-9999.

DEVELOPING FRENCH-FILIPINO BILATERAL RELATIONS

New French Ambassador to the Philippines Renee Veyret, inducted into office last May 28 and press attache Benedicte Meyssan recently joined Philippine Daily Inquirer officers for lunch held at the Inquirer offices. A veteran official of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Veyret has wishes to pursue the development of bilateral relations of France and the Philippines. Veyret is also one of many new female ambassadors, including Thai ambassador Busba Bunnag who also visited the Inquirer recently. In photo are (standing from left) Inquirer columnist Bambi Harper, senior vice president for corporate services David Valdes, corporate planning and business development manager Imelda Alcantara, Meyssan, Inquirer publisher Isagani Yambot, corporate relations manager Celine Madamba, and legal counsel lawyer Raul Palabrica; (sitting from left) Inquirer editorial consultant and columnist Amando Doronila, Veyret, Inquirer chair Marixi Prieto, and vice president and chief finance officer Luis Ymson.

CHINATRUST AGREEMENT

Chinatrust Commercial Bank Corp. assistant vice president for marketing services Cathy Alonso recently inked an agreement with the Far Eastern Economic Review circulation sales director James Sundram. The Dow Jones company, which also publishes the Asian Wall Street Journal, will feature a special edition of the Far Eastern Economic Review carrying the Chinatrust Special Cover for six consecutive issues beginning November. Shown, from left, are Alonso, Sundram and Far Eastern Economic Review's country manager April Antonio.

Investment opportunities from Banco de Oro

WHERE to invest your money in times of uncertainty? Banco de Oro, one of the country's top universal banks, has the answer for you, giving you a more secure financial future.

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For inquiries, call the BDO Call Center at 638-0808 or visit www.bancodeoro.com.ph.

My Home Magazine features entertaining issue

IN ANTICIPATION of the upcoming holidays, Earth+Style My Home magazine's second anniversary special features entertaining at its best. Showcased are marvelous table settings by stylish Tessa Prieto-Valdes and a one-of-a-kind outdoor setting by designer Rupert Acuña, among others.

Awe-inspiring homes featured in this issue include the private spaces of architect Lito Mercado and fashion designer Randy Ortiz. Breathtaking abodes designed by Teng Bustos, Baby Girl Fricke and architect Ed Gallego are also showcased.

In the trends section, a hint of the orient is apparent in the clever and stylish model homes from property developer Earth+Style Corp. Highlighting vital rooms of the home, the editorial provides smart ideas on home décor to inspire the discriminating homeowner.

Published by Earth+Style Corp., the lifestyle property developer, in cooperation with Mega Magazine and Publications Inc. (MMPI), Earth+Style My Home continues to make beautiful Filipino lifestyles happen, Earth+Style My Home is available bi-monthly in newsstands, bookstores and specialty shops nationwide for P125.

FILIPINOS ARE READER'S DIGEST EVERYDAY HEROES

Reader's Digest Filipino Everyday Heroes Enteng Tagle, the 'Little Rescuer' of the Payatas tragedy, and Patis Tesoro, the 'Strong Fiber' of the country's piña industry, were awarded certificates of recognition during a presentation ceremony recently hosted by the Reader's Digest at The Peninsula Manila. Present at the event to personally congratulate our Filipino Everyday Heroes were Peter Dockrill (left), editor in chief of Reader's Digest Asian English Edition, and Rosemarie Yau (right) regional corporate communications director of Reader's Digest Asia. Enteng and Tesoro's stories of inspirational deeds were featured in Reader's Digest's March and September 2002 issues respectively.

NEXTEL SUPPORTS BAZAAR

Nextel is the official communications partner of the 10th anniversary bazaar of Heaven Sent: The Lifestyle Bazaar at the Manila Polo Club ongoing until today. Shown are Nextel's sales and support manager Cecil Lopez, Nextel's marketing events manager Kary Ycasiano, HSB's project director Me-Ann Santiago, and the Manila Polo Club's F&B department's operations manager Fritz Weber.

PARTICIPANT IN ANNUAL WORLD CLEAN-DAY

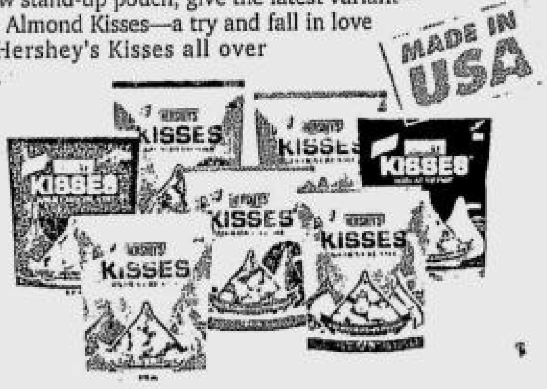
The 128th squadron members of the first district, Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, joined their counterparts and other civic organizations in cleaning up the Manila Bay in observance of the Annual World Clean-Up Day held Sept. 21. They are shown retrieving garbage at the wharf of the Philippine Coast Guard Training Command Center, Parola Tondo, Manila.

Product FILES

New Kisses in stand-up pouch

HERSHEY Philippines Inc. recently introduced to the Philippine market Hershey's Kisses in a new stand-up pouch. Filipinos can now enjoy their favorite US-made Kisses in this convenient packaging form. This latest packaging innovation keeps your favorite Kisses fresh and delicious, like getting it straight from the Hershey's factory in the United States.

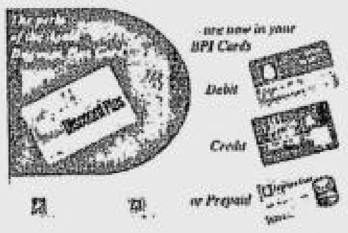
And while you're enjoying your favorite Kisses in the new stand-up pouch, give the latest variant—Toffee Almond Kisses—a try and fall in love with Hershey's Kisses all over again.



Product FILES

BPI-Ayala Malls Discount Plus introduced

THE BANK of the Philippine Islands and Ayala Land Inc. present the BPI-Ayala Malls Discount Plus Program, whereby the perks of the Ayala Discount Plus Card are automatically accorded to all BPI cardholders. Through the BPI-Ayala Malls Discount Plus Program, all BPI Express Cash, Express Credit, or Express Teller cardholders who use their BPI cards to pay for goods or services at over 800 participating Ayala Mall merchants in Ayala Center Makati (Glorietta or Greenbelt), Alabang Town Center, and Ayala Center Cebu entitles them to instant discounts or free perks. Moreover, purchases done via Express Cash or Express Credit will automatically earn Ayala Discount Plus (ADP) reward points. As an added value, BPI Express Credit cardholders earn ADP rewards points on top of any running Frequent User program. When a BPI cardholder makes a purchase at a participating ADP merchant, the store personnel will do an ADP rewards points inquiry via BPI's point-of-sale (POS) terminal. Should the merchant not have a BPI POS terminal, the inquiry can be made at the ADP booths strategically located within the malls. The BPI-Ayala Malls Discount Plus Program is open to all BPI cardholders without the need to register nor the need to pay any fees to participate in this more-power-for-your-peso-deal.



QUALITY CIRCLE COMPETITION WINNERS

The Auto Mechanics Circle of Sharp (Phils.) Corp. topped the recent Search for the Outstanding Quality Circle Project held during the Annual Productivity Improvement Circles National Convention (Picnic). Members of the winning group, headed by Jennelyn Leano (front, third from right) present their awards to SPC president Shigeo Kashimi (center), senior vice president Kazuhisa Kamiya and Sharp Philippines Services Corp. (SPSC) president and SPC vice president Ernesto F. Rendon (rear, second and third from left, respectively). Sharp, a leading consumer electronics manufacturer, is a practitioner of total quality management (TQM). A quality circle is a group, usually composed of about 6 to 9 people, that meet regularly to discuss quality-related work problems so circle members may generate solutions. The organization of a circle is based on the principle of voluntarism.

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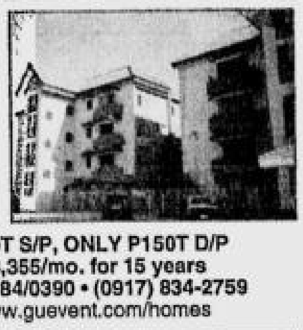

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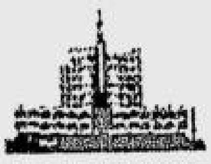

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Notice is hereby given that ITP CONSTRUCTION with business address at 10 Dao St. Project 3 Quezon City, has filed with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) for change of Business Status to ITP Construction Inc.

Said application has been officially accepted and is under process.

Engr. ISIDRO T. PAJARILLAGA
Authorized Managing Officer

(PDI--Nov. 26, 2002)

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PENSION CRISIS

Aging population could threaten Asia's growth

SINGAPORE—The rapidly aging population in the developed world could hurt Asian economies as precious funds are being used to finance bulging pension budgets, a US specialist warned Monday.

How European countries and the United States especially respond to the challenges arising from their aging populations will impact on the rest of the world including Asia, Richard Jackson, from the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies said.

"If the affluent economies fail to confront their own ageing challenge, the crisis could engulf the rest of the world," Jackson told a forum on aging organized by a Singapore think-tank, the Institute of Policy Studies. .

"The course they choose will shape not only their own destinies but East Asia's as well," he said.

"East Asia may experience widespread capital shortages as funds are diverted from financing productive investments in Hong Kong and Singapore to financing pension deficits in Berlin and Washington." This would result in shrinking Asian exports to the developed economies which would lead to slower growth in Asia, Jackson said.

He told the forum the world cannot avoid the challenge of an aging population, caused essentially by lower fertility rates and higher life expectancy.

"The world stands on the threshold of a great demographic revolution. It's called global aging and it is about to turn the world on its head," he said.

"Over the next few decades, the rapid aging of the developed world population will impose vast new costs on public budgets, bankrupting any government that fails to prepare." Failure to respond adequately would also have a huge impact on the global economy and the established world order, he said.

"It threatens to usher in widespread labor shortages and slower economic growth," Jackson said.

"It could destabilize global financial markets and it may even overturn the geopolitical order." Jackson warned that time was running out for policymakers to deal with the issue.

"We can engage the challenge constructively or we can wait for the challenge to overtake us but we cannot avoid it," he said.

The fallout from a failure to deal with a graying population could hurl the global financial markets into turmoil.

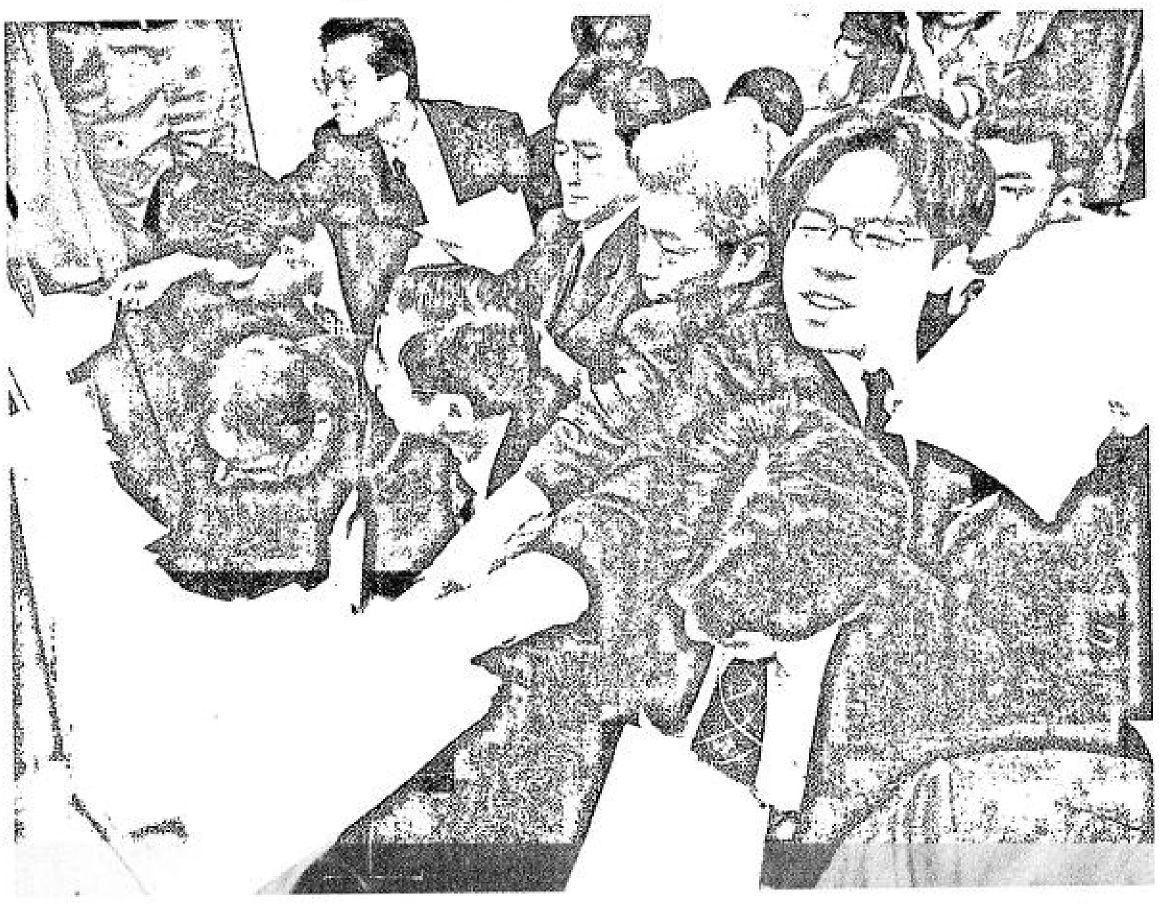
"Global aging may also usher in an era of greater instability for world financial markets," Jackson said.

"As retiring baby boomers begin cashing out assets, some economists predict that the markets will experience a great depreciation," he said.

"At the same time, government borrowings to finance retirement benefits could wreak financial havoc, widening pension deficits could shatter regional economic and monetary unions like the EMU (European Monetary Union)."

Even the social impact could be grave as companies sought to fill the gap in labor shortages by importing workers.

"One way or another, businesses will be looking for ways to tap into the developing world's surplus labor," he said. *AFP*



MESSENGERS from Japanese companies rush to shelfs to post their firm's corporate results showing six-month earnings until Sept. 30 this year to the press at the Tokyo Stock Exchange on Nov. 22. More than 400 of 2,000 companies listed on the stock exchange announced their business results today.

AFP

Japan export jump fails to dispel economy doubts

TOKYO—Japan's exports jumped in October, tempering worries that an export-reliant economic recovery was faltering fast, but economists said one-off factors flattered the trade picture and they remained skeptical about the outlook.

Exports jumped 14.3 percent from a year earlier to 4.65 trillion yen ($37.79 billion) in October for the eighth straight month of gains and rose 8.5 percent from September on a seasonally adjusted basis, halting a four-month slide, Ministry of Finance data showed on Monday.

The increase in exports—helped by a 28.1-percent rise in exports to Asian countries led by shipments of semiconductors, steel and cars—resulted in a 95.6-percent jump in the trade surplus from a year earlier to 902.0 billion yen ($7.33 billion).

Imports rose 3.9 percent from a year earlier to 3.75 trillion yen and were up a seasonally adjusted 1.6 percent from September.

"We think the strong export growth reflected signs of a pickup in overseas economies, including the United States. Of note is that exports to China have been increasing regardless of the global economy," said Yukari Sato, senior economist at JP Morgan in Tokyo.

Exports to China rose 47.1 percent from a year earlier. Those to South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia also grew by more than 20 percent.

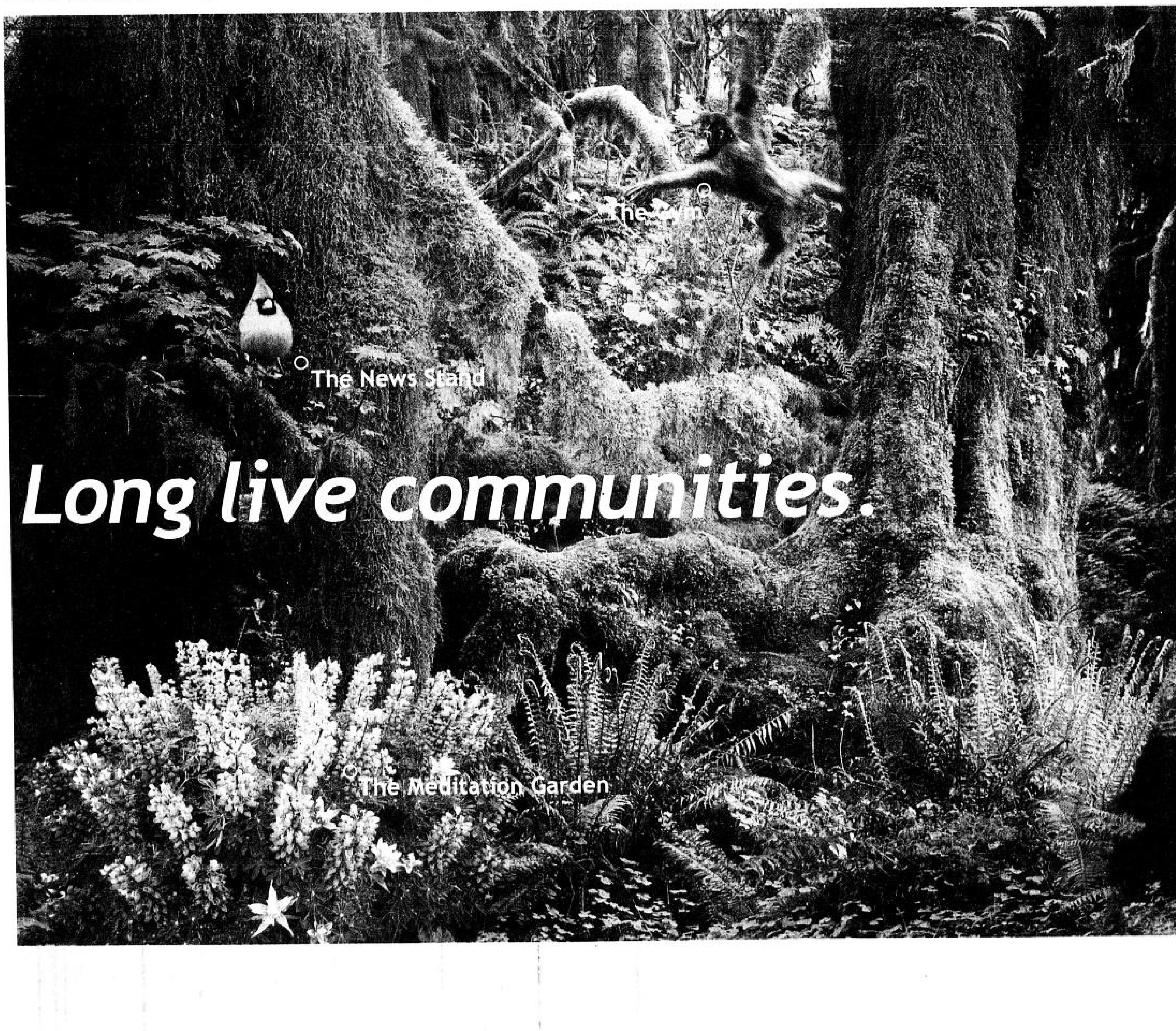
Exports to the United States rose 2.1 percent, helped by shipments of automobiles and office equipment, but imports from there fell, due in part to a port strike on the West Coast.

Figures released by Japan's big automakers later in the day showed four out of the five increased exports in October from a year earlier.

"You cannot expect the sort of momentum we saw in export growth in the first quarter of this year. But looking at figures for China and the United States, I think they can be a factor containing an economic downturn," Sato added.

Japan's July-September gross domestic product figures, which showed the economy had expanded for three straight quarters, revealed that external demand was a net negative contributor to the economy for the first time in four quarters.

July-September GDP was supported by resilience in consumer spending but most analysts doubt that will last in the face of corporate cost-cutting and anxiety over the sickly banking system. *Reuters*



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IMF says US recovery not strong as expected

NEW DELHI—The International Monetary Fund says economic recovery in the United States is not strong as expected.

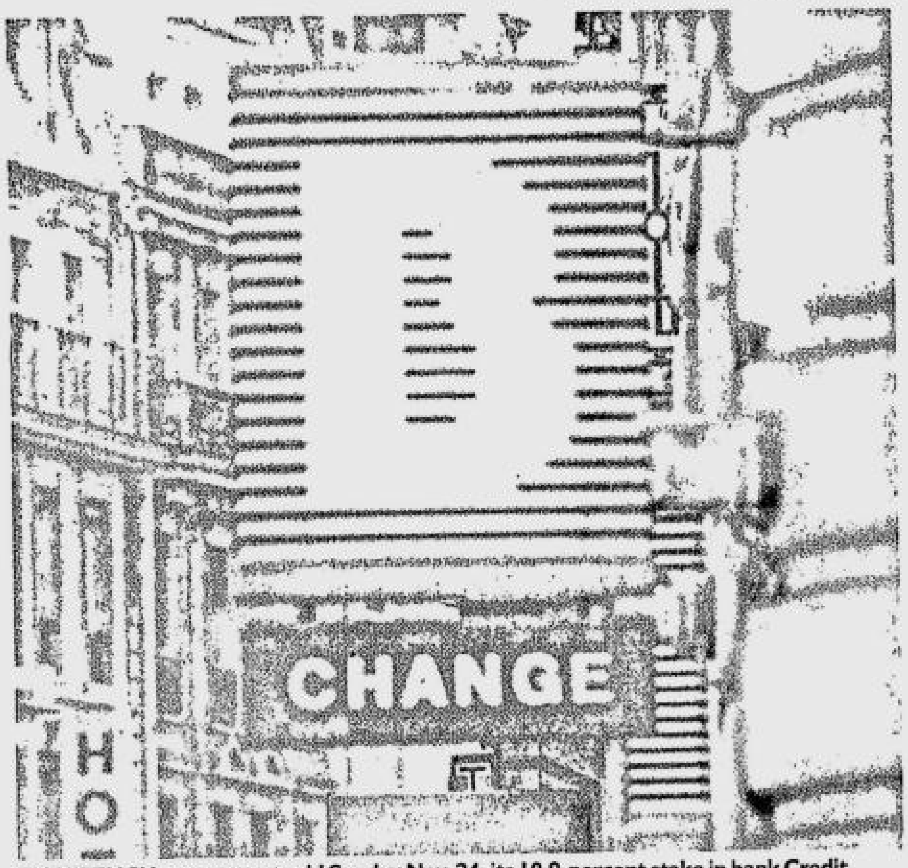
It added that it would like measures in place to ensure growth in Europe and Japan that would boost the global economy.

Anne Krueger, IMF's first deputy managing director, also told reporters in the Indian capital late on Sunday the outlook for European economies was "not that good" and was deteriorating almost monthly "as numbers come in."

"The IMF's view is very strongly that we would like to see measures taken to see other legs on the stool, namely Europe and Japan, growing somewhat more rapidly because that would obviously be good for everybody, including the United States," she said.

Krueger, who did not elaborate on what measures the IMF would like to see taken, was in India to take part in a meeting of finance minister and central bank chiefs from the Group of 20 rich and poor countries.

US Treasury Secretary Paul O' Neill, in India for the G-20 meeting, said on Friday that annual US economic growth could reach as high as 4 percent in mid-2003. *Reuters*



THE FRENCH government sold Sunday Nov. 24, its 10.9-percent stake in bank Credit Lyonnais to larger rival BNP Paribas for a stunning 2.2 billion euro ($ 2.2 billion), ending a speedy auction that caught off guard most of the country's banking elite. AP

Travel warnings hurt SE Asia growth

KUALA LUMPUR—Recent travel advisories warning Westerners they risk terror attacks in Southeast Asia may have a severe impact on the fragile economies of the region, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Abar said Monday.

"In the first place, the travel warning is not necessary. If you want to discourage the development of countries, this is the best way of punishing the countries.

"They would not be able to grow, their trade and investments will suffer. Tourism, which is a very big source of income, will also suffer," Syed Hamid said in a CNN television interview.

Australia, the United States and other Western countries have warned their citizens of the dangers of travel to Southeast Asia after the Oct. 12 Bali bombing in Indonesia.

A US State Department warning last week specifically mentioned Malaysia as a country where Westerners could be at risk of attack by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist network, blamed for the Bali bombing. *AFP*

Changes seen in Europe's vital antitrust controls

BRUSSELS—Europe's antitrust control is set for a radical makeover that will change the way firms, courts and countries do business across the 15-nation European Union.

The new rules affecting cartels and abuse of dominance will be voted on by EU ministers when they meet on Tuesday.

It is a sensitive area that includes probes into Microsoft Corp.'s alleged abuse of power, and price-fixing conspiracies which have prompted fines of hundreds of millions of euros.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will complement the new rules by voting on December 11 on a separate package of reforms overhauling the merger process in Europe. The two packages are unconnected.

At present, companies file notices with the Commission to make certain their partnerships with rivals and others are within antitrust law. The new rules do away with such reviews.

At the same time the new approach gives the bloc's member states and their courts a big role in enforcing community antitrust law.

The new rules also clarify the authority of the Commission to break up a company, if that is necessary to remedy violations of antitrust law. That has not happened yet in Europe.

And it gives authorities the right to raid private homes, with the permission of a national judge, in order to find materials in antitrust investigations.

Commission officials say the changes are long overdue. The old cartel rules of 1962 were designed to meet the needs of the then six members.

The Commission has got bogged down with the rules and matters would become worse in a European Union that will expand to 25 members in 2004. The Commission wants to give up responsibility for reviewing company agreements. *Reuters*

Dockworkers, shipping firms reach tentative agreement

SAN FRANCISCO—West Coast dockworkers and shipping companies reached tentative agreement on a contract that could end the drawn-out labor dispute that shut down the coast's major ports for 10 days and prompted the president to intervene.

The six-year contract would provide wage and benefit improvements for union members, plus technology and dispute-resolution improvements that the companies needed, said Peter Hurtgen, head of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

He praised both sides, saying lead negotiators "demonstrated statesmenlike leadership, which made this agreement possible."

The agreement, reached late Saturday, still must be ratified by a majority of the 10,500 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

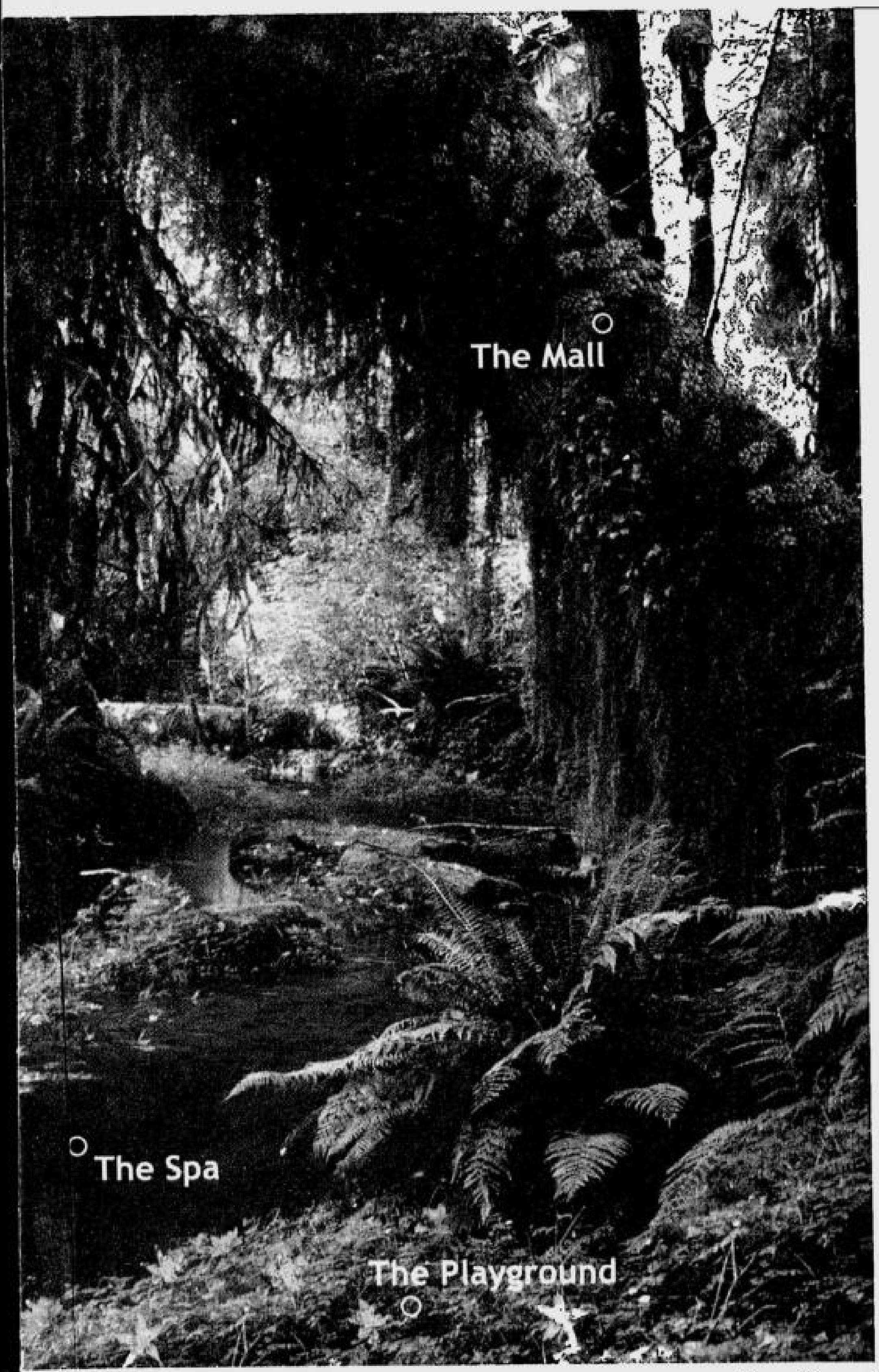
A caucus of about 100 union members will meet Dec. 7 to vote on the contract, and the entire rank-and-file will probably vote on it in early January, according to union president Jim Spinosa.

The shippers' association, the Pacific Maritim Association, had locked out dockworkers at the 29 major Pacific ports for 10 days, leading President George W. Bush to invoke federal legislation to open the docks Oct. 9 to avoid an economic crisis. The ports handle more than $300 billion in trade each year.

The lockout began after the companies accused the union of an illegal work slowdown to gain leverage in the contract negotiations.

Some economists estimated that the US economy lost $1 billion each day as cargo piled up at the docks and ships waited at anchor offshore. Some factories shut down for lack of supplies.

The major sticking points in the negotiations had centered on the desire by the Pacific Maritime Association, for computerized cargo tracking systems that will make dockside work more efficient, but also cost jobs. *AP*



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Community Innovations, Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ayala Land, Inc., the country's leading and most experienced real estate developer. Our passion lies in building carefully-planned and meticulously-designed communities that work.

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Our first project is Verdana Homes at the border of Las Piñas and Bacoor. Developed for the urban achievers, Verdana Homes has become a milestone for them in their continuing quest for success.

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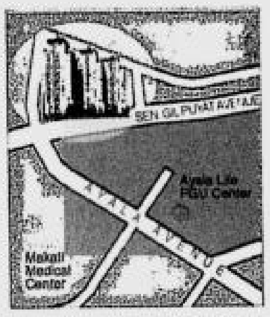
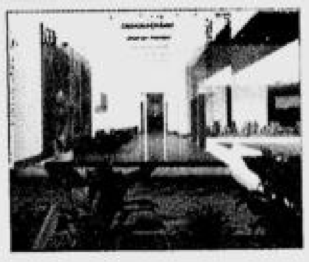
Promising a friendly, warm, and safe environment where families can feel at home, the first phase of Verdana Homes was sold out in mere months. Its second phase is well on its way to similar success.

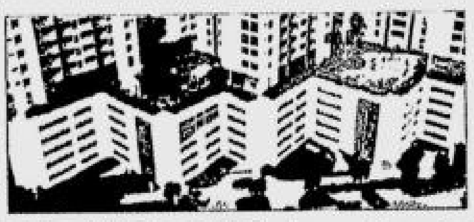
THREE NEW BUILDINGS

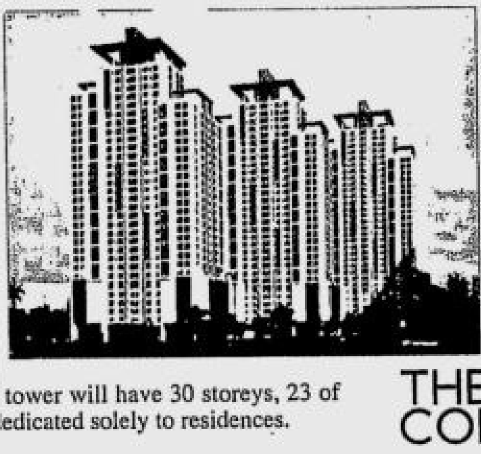
Now we plan to embark on a brand-new venture: our first vertical development, a three-tower condominium complex within Makati's central business district.

Christened The Columns, Ayala Avenue, our newest baby will rise at the corner of Ayala and Sen. Gil J. Puyat (Buendia) Avenues. Each tower will have 30 storeys, 23 of which will be dedicated solely to residences.









The towers will rise upon a vast single podium whose deck will feature adult and kiddie swimming pools, function rooms for meetings and events, a gym/fitness center and jogging path for the health buff, a game room with mini-home theater system for hanging out with friends, and a daycare center with both indoor and outdoor play area for kids. There will be an outdoor barbecue area for the family and meditation alcoves to nurture your souls. Residents' guests can take advantage of rooms set aside specifically for them, almost like a hotel.

Another feature unique to The Columns, Ayala Avenue, the ground level will house an inviting mix of landscaped plazas, cafes, and outdoor dining, ideal for unwinding after a day's work.

The first home of young urban achievers, a relaxing oasis in the middle of everything, The Columns, Ayala Avenue will be the ideal place to *"live a few steps away from everything."*

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REAL ESTATE

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

'Soothing' interiors the in-thing for homes

By Tessa R. Salazar

DEVELOPERS have been witnesses lately to the selling power of a good interior, perhaps even as much selling power as a good exterior.

Buyers nowadays don't want developers to leave much to the imagination. They want to enter a model house complete with air-conditioning, furniture arrangements, lighting. Buyers turn away from bare model units.

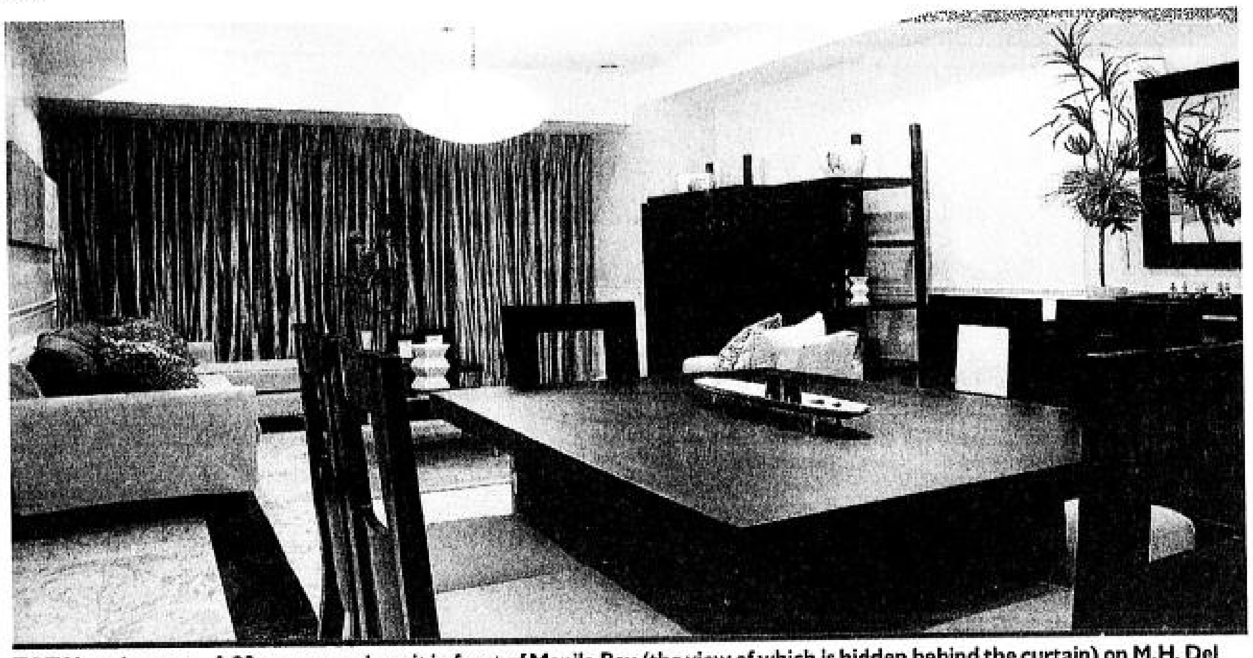
And do buyers demand arrangements. Homebuyers' tastes have become sophisticated due partly to their exposure to the ambiance offered by malls, restaurants, cafès and bars—proliferating commercial spaces with foreign influences.

The desire for an improved design starts, of course, after witnessing signature designs of other dwelling places. Filipinos' foreign tastes motivate them to make do with local resources and turn these into, well, something else, such as bamboo transformed to contemporary uses.

Pinky B. Cruz, an interior designer who partnered with colleague Sonia S. Velarde to form Creative Post Inc., says this has been the Filipino homebuyers' psyche recently. Creative Post offers thematic designs of residential and commercial buildings.

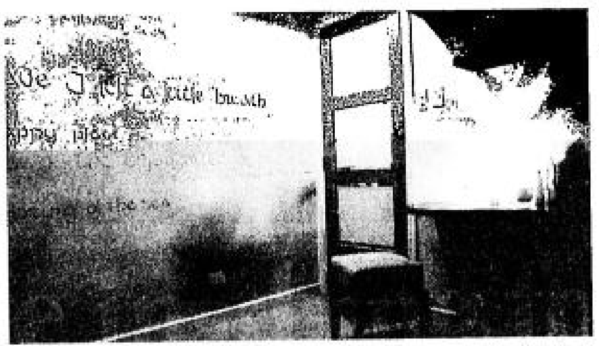
Cruz said that among many contemporary designs, many Filipinos are exploring the Zen look, a fusion of Japanese and Western patterns of thinking and lifestyle. Zen reflects simplicity and serenity, which, translated to interior designing, postulates minimalism, neutral tones, and a soothing, uncluttered look. Zen also suggests repetitive patterns of shapes and designs.

With the soft modernist look, Zen promises to bring harmony and balance to the home, while soothing a busy lifestyle. Sounds like a perfect counterpoint to the driven yuppie (young professional) who often finds himself pressured by the demands of career and family.



TOTAL makeover—A 93-sq.-m condo unit in front of Manila Bay (the view of which is hidden behind the curtain) on M.H. Del Pilar Street in Manila was totally renovated. Almost all the furniture, beds, and paintings, were "reoriented" according to the Zen ambiance. The toilet's shiny ceramic tiles (not shown) were removed while a glass bowl and lighting fixtures were attached. The total setting, including accessories, is valued at P800,000.

A TOUCH of Zen in the dining area



THE ZEN guestroom—The poetry is about a garden by the bay. The actual housing unit is in front of Manila Bay. Cloudlike simulation and calligraphy is applied. For added effects, the lighting is so diffused it all comes from a lamp. The door is pure almasica with frosted glass

"This is the most appropriate for our culture because we have a variety of materials here. Zen is very (easy) for us since we have had Spanish and Mexican influences, among others. The Filipino psyche is a fusion," says Cruz.

Earth colors are espoused in Zen. It is the "safest" of hues, as they blend with almost everything—from stone to wood to anything that can be found in nature.

As an interior designer of high-end, middle to lower middle-class housing developments, designers of Creative Post have to adjust their perspectives when designing for the rich and the working class: how opulent interiors have to be for the affluent or how functional and efficient the use of minimal spaces are for the working class.

"Design is an expression. Your canvas is the space. But we're artists here. How you handle each artwork differs from the other. Other designs are abstract, others very traditional. An interior design should be an expression, it should reflect the user of the space," she says.

Among several developments, Creative Post arranges the interiors of Brittany, which develops high-end developments and normally caters to expatriates and executives. Crown Asia, which it also handles, is geared toward young professionals, newlyweds, and overseas contract workers. Palmera and Camella homes, built mostly for the working class, also showcase Creative Post's inputs in their model homes.

Cruz describes Crown Asia habitués as people who have relaxed and casual lifestyles, the taste and the sophistication, but are not the ultra rich. Such clients, Cruz says, still work on a budget.

"With Camella (or Palmera) we're talking of proper storage and functionality, educate (buyers) in terms of colors, the use of compact, clean, airy and livable spaces, and open plans," she says.

Creative Post also caters to individual clients. These are the most specialized of its clients, since they have different demands, and an interior designer has to deal with each client's idiosyncrasies. These are people who usually live in Valle Verde, Magallanes or Ayala Alabang.

Aside from interior designing, Creative Post also acts like a one-stop shop for materials. It offers fabrics, upholsteries for cushion requirements, among others. It has a team of artists, painters and carpenters.

"It's like, 'hey I have this space, can you do it for me?' Whether or not you have a concept, we can do it for you. Or if you have a concept we can implement it," she says.

Cruz says not every interior designing outfit can be a Creative Post, as she describes interior designing as "very specialized" and "very service-oriented."

"We even include paintings in the accessories (lineup); sometimes the design is ruined because the owner would insist on a painting that doesn't fit the theme. We advise the owner. We ask the owner to buy (such) a painting and we accompany him or her. We suggest what fits this or that interior," she says.

PRESIDENT Macapagal witnesses the signing by housing industry leaders and Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani G. Braganza (third from left) of a memorandum of agreement seeking to harmonize the objectives of housing and agrarian reform as mandated by the Constitution itself. From left are OSHDP chair Wilfredo M. Tan, WISE vice chair Jeanne Menguito, HUDCC chair Michael T. Defensor, Creba national president Florentino S. Dulalia Jr., SHDA national president Jesus Atencio, NREA chair Jose V. Manalad and Bata chair Romeo R. Liamzon Jr. Standing with the President are (from left) Rep. Prospero C. Nograles, chair, House committee on housing and urban development, and Rep. Eduardo C. Zialcita, principal author of proposed the Housing and Urban Development Act.

Designer Blooms brings Christmas to Vivant Flats

IMAGINE spending your first Christmas in your dream condominium. This is the vision award-winning flower shop Designer Blooms had in mind when it decorated the model units of Vivant Flats at Festival Supermall.

With festive greens and floral accents, Designer Blooms captures the warmth and joy of the holiday season, bringing Christmas cheer to the one-bedroom and two-bedroom model units of Vivant Flats. Glittering garlands and artistic table arrangements complete the image of a picture-perfect Christmas home.

One of the most sought-after names in the floral industry, Designer Blooms is the country's largest chain of specialty artificial, natural dried and fresh-cut flowers. The company has been twice awarded Retailer of the Year and has recently expanded into franchising operations nationwide.

Festive hues

As you enter the tastefully designed model units, enlivened by the festive hues of the season, you can immediately sense that Vivant Flats is a home where you'll look forward to spending a lifetime of Christmases with your loved ones. A 17-story residential tower within Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang, it offers luxurious condominium living for people who put a premium on value.

The project's unique feature is its affordability. With a new concept called "Shared Development" you can acquire your unit at exactly the cost to build it. Risk-free from start to finish, and with flexible payment terms, it puts your dream condo within reach.

DESIGNER Blooms makes the model units of Vivant Flats picture-perfect Christmas homes.

Vivant Flats enjoys a prime location in the city's premium condominium block. Right across is the Southpoint Driving Range while down the street is the Festival Supermall, the biggest shopping center in the south. One block away is the Asian Hospital and within a few blocks are Northgate CyberZone's technology companies and an IT school.

Recreational amenities

Designed by Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo, world-renowned architects for the hospitality, leisure, entertainment and residential industries, Vivant Flats offers recreational amenities such as a swimming pool, children's pool and playground, jogging path with fitness station, function room, open areas for social functions and landscaped gardens. Complemented by modern building facilities, five parking levels and 24-hour security, Vivant Flats features the best of high-rise convenience.

The model units of Vivant Flats are located at the 3rd level of Festival Supermall (near Festival Bingo, fronting Subway). For inquiries, interested parties may call 809-6517 or e-mail sales@filinvestcorpcity.com.

Pledge of Creba, 5 industry groups surpasses GMA's homes target

THE CHAMBER of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) and five private sector organizations of builders—Subdivision and Housing Developers Association (SHDA), Builders Alliance Towards Action (Bata), National Real Estate Association (NREA), Organization of Socialized Housing Developers of the Philippines (OSHDP) and Women in Shelter and Environment (WISE)—pledged last week to deliver more socialized and low-cost housing units than President Macapagal-Arroyo's target of half million units for homeless Filipinos in a bid to ease the housing shortage in the next few years.

At the pledging session in Malacañang, a thankful President said she was overwhelmed by the industry response to her call for active private sector involvement in the housing program. She added she does not doubt the industry's capability to make good on its commitment. She cited "the crucial policy reforms," including lower loan interest rates for homebuyers, more private sector financing and other housing incentives.

Creba commitment

The commitment of Creba led by national president Florentino S. Dulalia Jr., Bata represented by chair Romeo R. Liamzon Jr., NREA by chair Jose V. Manalad, OSHDP by chair Wilfredo M. Tan, and WISE by vice chair Jeanne G. Menguito, is part of the industry's overall effort to "transform into reality the dream of every Filipino to have decent shelter for himself and his family," Dulalia said.

While SHDA national president Jesus B. Atencio and Creba's Dulalia separately presented their respective groups' commitments, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council chair Michael T. Defensor noted the unprecedented joint pledging session had unified the industry in serving the homeless and the nation. Dulalia himself declared the industry "stands united in purpose, vision and conviction to respond affirmatively to the challenges of a viable housing program for homeless families and thus help achieve the overall goal of enhancing the quality of life of our people." Dulalia and Atencio sat side by side with the President.

The SHDA pledged the delivery of 236,076 units by 2004, while Creba and the four other groups—Bata, NREA, OSHDP and WISE—committed a combined total of 325,425 units by the end of the Macapagal administration in 2010. Thus, the commitments of Creba with four other industry groups, and of SHDA accounted for a total of 561,501 housing units, surpassing the President's target of 300,000 units in her 2001 and 2002 State of the Nation Addresses, and even her new target of 500,000 units within a decade.

Historic agreement

On the same occasion, Creba and the four industry organizations, joined by the SHDA, signed in the presence of President Macapagal a historic memorandum of agreement with the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council on the provision of equitable land access for housing and urban development.

Following drawn-out consultations between industry groups led by Creba, and the public sector led by the HUDCC and the DAR, the agreement was finalized recognizing the compatibility of agrarian reform and housing development. Thus, the DAR committed to make readily available at least 200,000 hectares of land for housing and urban development for the next 20 years.

With this MOA, Dulalia pointed out, "it will now be possible to reduce by 50 percent the current shortage of housing units estimated at five million, by the year 2010."

Dulalia said the industry's commitment fully supports President Macapagal's "vow of pursuing the housing program to provide decent housing and basic services to our homeless citizens."

Pump-priming role

On account of its pump-priming role in business and industries, Dulalia stressed, "the housing and building industry contributes much to the national economy in terms of livelihood and employment opportunities, thereby promoting economic growth all around."

Under the MOA among DAR, HUDCC, Creba, SHDA, Bata, NREA, OSHDP and WISE, the signatories agreed to work closely in harmonizing the objectives of agrarian reform and the housing program in order to serve the basic needs of both urban and rural sectors in line with the Constitution.

In the joint 2002 National Convention of Creba and HUDCC in Baguio City last October, Creba and the four other organizations joined hands to pledge the delivery of thousands of housing units for the President's program. Defensor received the pledge on behalf of the President who at the time was consulting with policy makers to bring about housing program reforms to enable the industry to actively pursue their projects.

The Baguio convention also marked Creba's 29th founding anniversary as the oldest industry organization. It counts on some 4,000 institutional, corporate and individual professional members, with 42 regional and provincial chapters in the country. Recently, it organized a number of Creba-USA chapters in California and New York. It also plans to establish other chapters in other parts of the US, in Europe and Asia.

TURNOVER RITES
A livelihood program was recently initiated by the Housing and Community Development Movemen. Assorted vegetable seeds were solicited for the benefit of the Community Association of the Habitat for Humanity Foundation Inc. housing project at Pinugay, Rizal. They were supplied by the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation Inc. through sponsorship of Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. From left are Jun M. Maceda, board chair, HCDM; Rev. Pastor Edgar A. Caberos, president, Habitat Community Association at Pinugay, Rizal; Chito Bertol, presiden, Manila Seedless Bank Foundation; Jun M. Magat, value formation director, HCDM; Mrs. Cabreros; engineer Porthos Alma Jose, president, Rizal Habitat For Humanity Foundation Inc. and Ed Javier, community organizer, HCDM.

Robinsons Land starts Lipa mall construction

ROBINSONS Land Corp. recently held the groundbreaking ceremony for Robinsons Place Lipa in Batangas. This project is expected to be completed by the 3rd quarter of 2003.

ROBINSONS Place Lipa

The soon-to-be-constructed mall will have two levels with a roof deck and an open parking space. More than 36,000 square meters have been allotted for this mall which would house the Big R Supercenter, an amusement center, food court, Handyman hardware store and five cinemas.

Situated at Barangay Mataas na Lupa, Lipa City, Batangas, this mall is accessible to the residents of Lipa City and Batangas City as well as the surrounding towns. A fast growing commercial and industrial enclave in the Calabarzon region, Lipa is considered a first-class city in Batangas.

Developers' group to spend P100B for its housing pledge

By Charles E. Buban

SOME 72 private developers belonging to the country's largest developers' association will be spending an estimated P100 billion for the next two years in housing and construction ventures, an amount expected to pump-prime the economy.

According to President Macapagal-Arroyo who accepted the pledges from developers last week, this commitment is expected to stimulate the stagnant economy noting that the housing sector has one of the largest multiplier effects in the economy.

The estimated P100 billion would be spent in building 237,000 houses by 2004.

"This is an unprecedented call to build houses for the working class," said President Macapagal during the pledging session held in Malacañang.

More on low cost housing

The total number of houses is broken down to the following segments:

- 77,000 units for low-cost housing worth P28.9 billion (at P375,000 each)
- 33,084 units for socialized housing worth P6.62 billion (at P200,000 each)
- 66,423 units for middle-income groups worth P53.14 billion (at P800,000 each)
- the remaining for upscale projects worth over P11 billion.

These projects are mostly aimed at the countryside with about half of the number going to Luzon sites.

Some 38,000 units or 20 percent will go to Mindanao while the Visayas and Metro Manila will get 15 percent each.

Ms Macapagal also stressed that this pledge by the country's biggest developers is only a fraction of what is expected to achieve.

"I understand that because the pledges are voluntary, only about 36 percent was able to submit their figures in time for the pledging session," said Ms Macapagal referring to the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association who spearheaded the pledging event with the President.

Those who were able to submit their pledges early belong to the country's top industry players including Laguna Properties Holdings (an Ayala Land subsidiary), Robinsons Homes, Filinvest, Phinma Properties, Stateland, R-II Builders, Solar Resources, Confed and Property Co.

Completing the group are the other small, medium, large and publicly listed SHDA member-developers that will be involved in this mass-housing commitment.

Developers encouraged

Ms Macapagal said the growth of the country's exports and imports, the gross domestic product and the lowering of interest rate are providing the necessary business climate that can greatly encourage these developers to fast-track their pipeline projects and build more houses.

According to SHDA president Jesus Atencio, these housing and related infrastructure projects are traditionally the pump-primping engine of growth of depressed economies.

"We believe this SHDA pledge will provide the much-needed impetus to put our growth back on track," he said, adding that housing projects usually trigger a 16 percent multiplier effect on the country's economy.

Atencio also added that most of the projects committed are either already ongoing or slated to start in 2003 and have already agreed to establish a jointly led monitoring task force with the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council.

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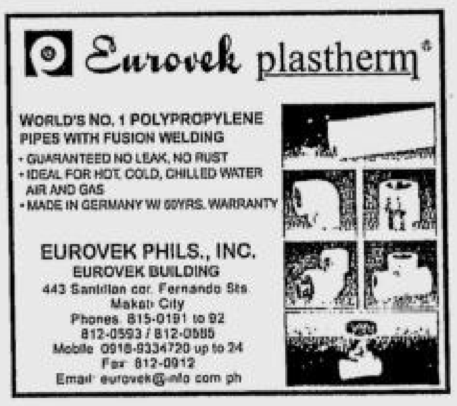

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Essensa reports strong leasing, sales of units

ESSENSA, the first ultra-luxurious residential condominium in Fort Bonifacio Global City, reports a strong leasing activity of units in the first 10 months of 2002. Composed of 226 three-bedroom residential suites equally distributed in two towers—Lawton and Cameron, Essensa is said to be the most private of all new generation high-rise residential developments.

In fact, Century Properties Inc. officials are very much encouraged by the current demand in Essensa units as shown in its occupancy rate of 80 percent. Because Essensa provides the right level of privacy, utmost service and top-of-the line amenities that expats look for in a residential, it has successfully created its own niche in the market and has developed a strong following from the embassies and multinationals.

Essensa prides itself to be the first "white-glove" residential address in the Philippines. Combining classic architecture, functional amenities, and well-spaced unit layouts, those who have "experienced" Essensa claim "it ranks as one of the best in Asia today." Boasting of a complete range of lifestyle amenities, living in Essensa allows one to enjoy the use of the "E Club" fully equipped with the latest state-of-the-art gym facilities, massage and wellness rooms, steam and hot pool, not to mention an outdoor and a heated indoor pool at that.

Likewise, each residential suite has its own Gourmet Kitchen that, as was observed, has been a conversation piece because of its top-of-the-line appliances.

Sales performance of Essensa within the first 10 months of the year has proven the project's success as it has surpassed the performance of the whole year 2001. Encouraged by the recovery of the market, buyers have continued to grab the opportunity to own an Essensa by availing of low-interest rates now available to them. To meet the demand, Century Properties recently opened a limited number of prime units for sale or lease.

Are you inviting termites into your home?

EXPERTS say there are only two kinds of home: one that has termites and one that will have. But this does not mean waiting helplessly until your house falls down. As homeowner, there are things you could do to avoid serious damage to structures inside your property.

- **Don't leave piles of wood sitting in your backyard.** You will find that termites are such excellent foragers they will get to these piles of wood in no time and then use them to get to other points in your home. If your property is being renovated, check if any scaffolding materials were left behind by the carpenter or construction worker. Cellulosic materials like paper also serve as termite food.
- **Check for openings and cracks in walls.** Even when you live in a concrete building, termites can get to the upper floors of your home/property and damage your valuable "Malang" by traversing cracks in the structure. Regularly inspect your store room and make sure your file boxes, tents, cardboard boxes and stored documents are safe from termites.
- **Do you declare the war over once the queen termite is caught?** Here's news for you: Life will go on for these termites even after the queen is captured because winged male and female termites can spawn new termite colonies. Swarming reproductives are mature male and female termites with wings that are released by the colony as potential kings and queens of new termite monarchies. These swarmers disperse various times of the year from their parent colony depending on factors like moisture, light intensity and temperature. The reproductives then lose their wings, pair off in a favorable site to start a new kingdom.

You can have multiple termite colonies attacking your home all at once so capturing one queen termite may not mean the end of your infestation woes.

- **Don't ignore the problem, act now.** If you discover discarded wings near windows or blistering beneath painted wood, it's time to call the exterminator. The cost of protecting your home from voracious termites is very little compared to spending for major structural repairs. Think of it as an investment to protect your bigger investment.
- **Make a background check on the anti-termite technicians before you employ their services.** Check if the pestcon group is registered with the Fertilizers and Pesticides Authority. Be wary of groups that quote bargain-basement costs; cheap service does not necessarily translate to better service. When technicians explain the process of termite extermination, be attentive and ask questions so you know what's going on.

Anti-termite technology

Now, Filipino home and property owners can have peace of mind. Sentricon Termite Colony Elimination System, the anti-termite technology that effectively protects the White House, the Statue of Liberty and many homes and properties across Asia, Europe, Australia and the US is available in the Philippines.

Sentricon, developed by industry leader Dow AgroSciences, takes advantage of natural termite behavior and effectively gets subterranean termites where they live.

Sentricon protects your home in three steps: First, pest control professionals will place monitoring stations in the soil around the sites, checking these regularly for signs of termite activity. Next, as soon as termites begin feeding in the station, Sentricon technicians will replace the monitoring unit with a Baitube device that contains termite bait (the substance prevents them from molting, so that they are unable to grow, causing them to die). The termites will unsuspectingly summon their nest mates to the bite by leaving special scent trails that lead to the bait. Finally, once the colony is eliminated, the bait will be replaced with new monitoring devices which the technician will inspect closely and regularly for renewed termite activity.

Environment friendly

Sentricon is odorless, nondisruptive and environment-friendly making it especially suited for homes, food establishments, hospitals, hotels, schools, warehouses and museums. The bait material, hexaflumuron, is the first pest control product in the US to receive fast-track registration from the Environmental Protection Agency in the new Reduced Pesticide Risk category. It was also awarded by the Clinton administration the US Presidential Green Chemistry Award for its commitment to keep the environment safe.

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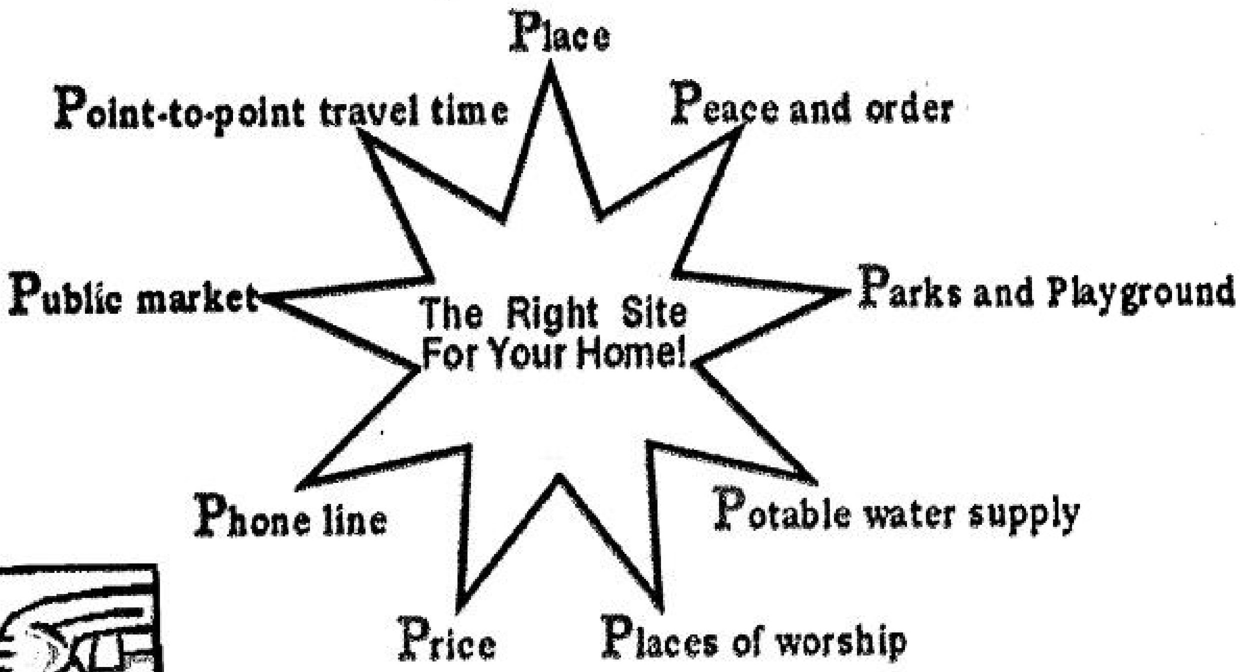
The 9 Ps of site selection for your home



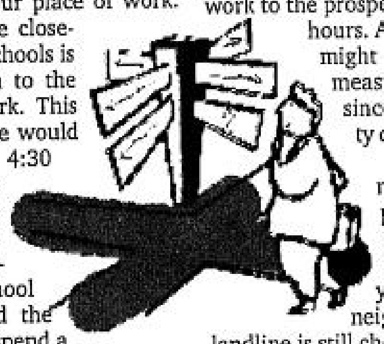
By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

BUILDING DREAMS

DECIDING on the area to live can be a difficult and tedious process. This article aims to enlighten you—the homebuyer—in selecting the right area to live. While marketing people are struggling and debating on how many Ps there are in marketing, here are the Ps of site selection for your home. This set of advice is meant for end users and real estate investors who would want to get the best value for their money.

Here are some guidelines in choosing the lot to build your home. Of course you may have your personal reasons but these are some of the generally accepted rules in choosing a lot for one's residence:

Place. As the old real estate saying goes, location is still the main factor in the choice of lot wherein you would want to live. A good location consists of many positive attributes of a specific area. Choose a location that is convenient to both the school of your children (if you have) and your place of work. Most of the time, the closeness of the home to schools is more important than to the parents' place of work. This simply means that we would rather wake up at 4:30 a.m. in order to beat the traffic than make our children wake up at the same time in order to catch the school bus. Having selected the place where we will spend a substantial part of our lives, we have to look at the other Ps.



Peace and order. This is of a primary concern for all of us. We all want a place where our families can live, play and roam around freely. Upon entering a subdivision, check on how the security handles visitors. The more questions they ask you and the more irritated you are, most of the time, the more strict the security is within an area. The areas surrounding a subdivision should be checked to make sure that the perimeter walls are properly protecting the area.

Potable water supply. Make sure that there is enough water supply in the neighborhood that you are considering. A big elevated water tank being used by the subdivision is no guarantee of a continuous water supply. The best way to check: ask the neighbors. Small water trucks running around the subdivision obviously indicates a water supply problem. Try going to the site on a Saturday morning and see how many households are cleaning their cars with a water hose. Try to look at the back of the existing houses to check whether they have water storage tanks—indicating that there is no continuous supply of water.

Point-to-point travel time. It is best to check for yourself the actual travel time from your place of work to the location of the property that you are considering. The best way to check: ride your own car and drive. Some sellers would tell you that it would only take you 20 minutes to drive from the lot they are selling to Makati. But what they did not tell you is that you should be driving a 400 horsepower Ferrari at 2 a.m. If you are using public transportation, try commuting from your place of work to the prospective site during peak hours. A site visit on a Sunday might give you a different measurement of travel time since most roads are empty on weekends.

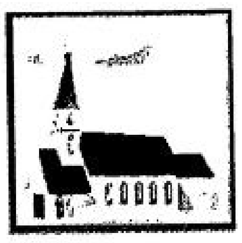
Phone line. Ask the nearest phone service provider on the availability of phone lines in your area. Better yet, ask your future neighbor. Remember, a landline is still cheaper to maintain than a cellular phone.

Price. Make sure that you are getting the best price for the property that you want. Ask around and look at similar properties around the area. When moving from a highly priced neighborhood to a lowly priced one, you may have a tendency to see that the prices in your prospective area are low. When moving from a lowly priced area to a highly priced one, your point of view might be that the prices are very high—without even knowing that what you are being offered is a bargain!

It is also not wise to compare properties on price alone since different properties have different attributes. Appraisal by a professional might help you in assessing the specific property you are interested in. Purchasing a residential lot might be one of the biggest purchases that you will have in your entire life and it requires a long decision process. Compare your options very carefully and ask for professional advice.

Be extra careful in buying properties that are priced substantially lower than the prevailing rates, there might be something that the seller is hiding from you.

Parks and playground. Open spaces are necessary if we would want to enjoy the weekends with our children. It is in this area where we can mingle and interact with our neighbors. Check the area for sports facilities, pools and function areas. Clubhouses located inside gated subdivisions can be used to celebrate the special occasions and parties of our lives, especially if we love to entertain and the house that we are planning to build will not be able to accommodate all our guests.



Places of worship. The location of a chapel is important to quite a few of homebuyers since some people go to Mass every morning. We have seen buyers selecting locations within walking distance to the chapel so that they can have easy access every morning. Be careful though if you are buying a property near open spaces and chapels since these places can get very crowded on Sundays. But the accessibility to these areas compensate for the crowdedness during busy days.

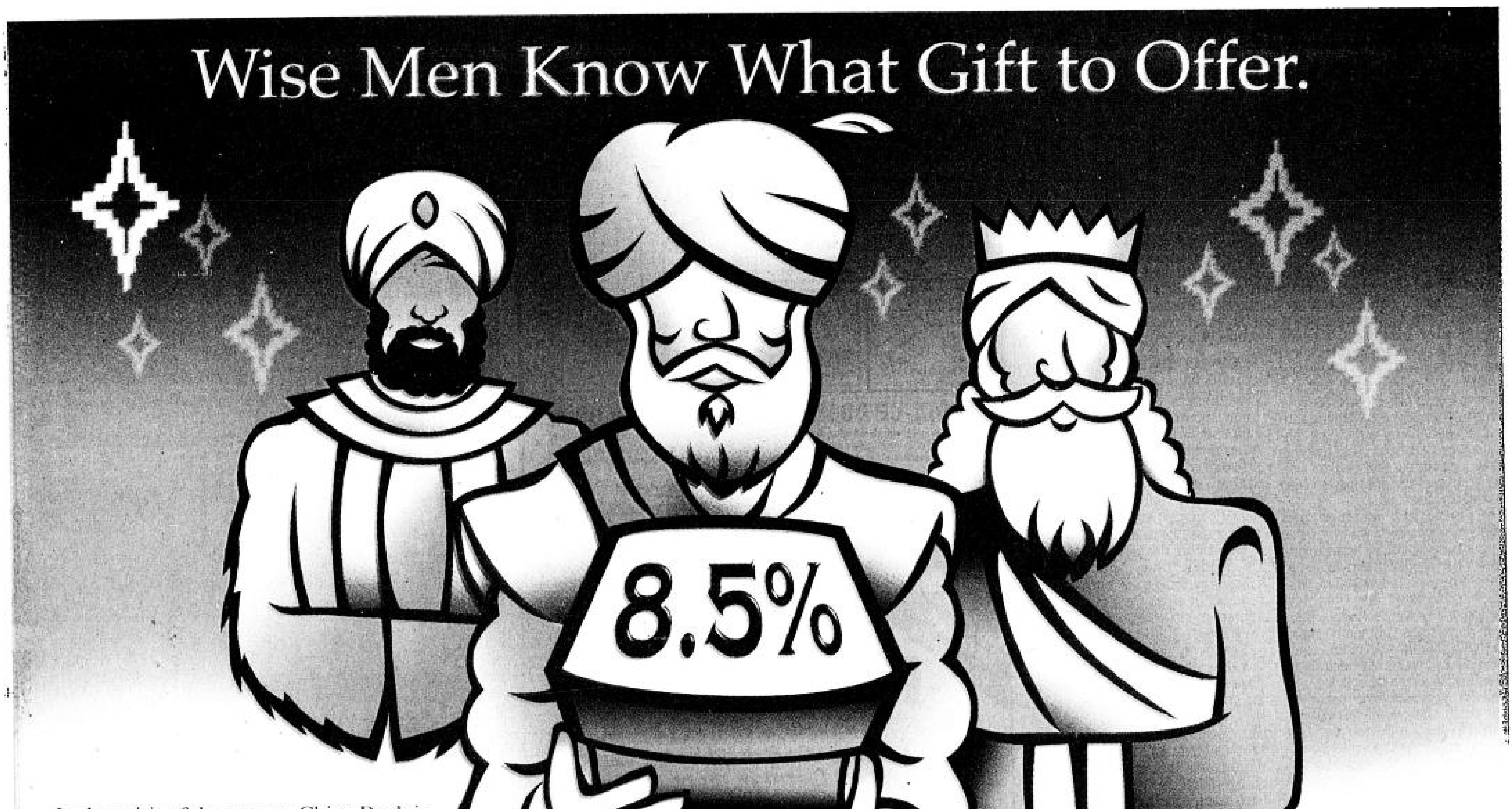
Public places and public market ("palengke"). Of course, we have to eat every day and we all want a convenient location to get our groceries and daily needs. The accessibility to the malls these days have been a criterion in site selection since we can also get our groceries in these areas. Of course, the malls also have become places of recreation and entertainment. Being located near malls and public places can also bring about inconveniences like traffic congestion, noise and air pollution.

Having explained the 9 Ps of site selection, it is up to us to decide on which P is most important to us. We have to realize that we are all different with different needs and different priorities. The key words to remember here are "balance" and "priorities." There is no "perfect" location—only one that will satisfy most of our needs. Selecting the right location is only half the battle. We have to select the right home for us and there is only one combination to get the perfect home—the right location and the right house. If we make a mistake in one of these, then we may never fully enjoy the fruits of our labor.

The 9 Ps above only cover the physical aspects of the properties that we are considering. Remember that there are still legal aspects to take care of. It is best to consult the real estate broker or legal counsel of your choice. Good luck in your site selection!

* * *

(Acacio is an associate professor of Civil Engineering at the University of the Philippines. He is also a marketing and technical consultant to various real estate developers and construction companies. You may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)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invites you to join us in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.
Masses offered at the following churches today:

Immaculate Conception Church	Bauan Batangas	5:30 a.m.
Parish of the Mother of Perpetual Help	Aplaya, Bauan Batangas	6:00 a.m.
Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Church	Batangas City	6:00 a.m.
Parish of St. Mary Eufracia	Alangilan, Batangas City	7:00 a.m.

MARCELINA KALALO vda. de ALDAY

San Jose, Batangas
Peacefully joined the Lord on November 24, 2002
at the age of 90.

Her children **Peping & Letty (†)**, **Ester & Pedro**, **Rudy & Ligaya**, **Arturo (†) & Belen**, grandchildren **Alvin & Aiko**, **Raymund**, **Paul & Mark**, **Rinna & Rico**, **Rodney**, **Arlene & Joseph**, great grandchildren **Sabrina & AJ**, **Riel & Ria**, brothers and sisters **Pedro (†)**, **Barcelisa (†)**, **Benjamin (†)**, **Felipe**, **Conrado**, **Vicente**, **Modesto**, **Catalina**, **Asuncion & Juanito**, sisters & brothers-in-law and other relatives request you to remember her in your prayers.

Her remains lie in state at the **Capilla de San Jose, Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Joseph, San Jose, Batangas.**

Interment will be on **Thursday, November 28, 2002** after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Joseph, San Jose, Batangas.

BEATRIZ LECAROS TRINIDAD

Peacefully joined our Lord
on November 25, 2002
at the age of 71.

Her husband **Umberto**; daughter **Nadia**; brothers **Alfonso Lecaros Jr.** and **Antonio Lecaros**; sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, November 28, 2002 at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Q.C. after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture
can be a fitting tribute to your
departed loved one.
Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

MA. ERLINDA "LYNDA" Z. FLORENTINO

Passed away in the Grace of the Lord
on November 14, 2002 in New York City.

Her parents **Marceling (†) & Lulu (†)**; brothers **Boybi (†) & Nonong**; sister **Marilou**; sisters-in-law **Medi Feliciano & Maripaz Alvarez** and brother-in-law **Nonong Maceda**; nephews, nieces and other relatives request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her cremated remains will be at the Hearts of Jesus & Mary Church in West Triangle, Q.C. during the 6:00 p.m. Mass on Friday, November 29, 2002.

Interment will be on December 1, 2002 at the Lingsat Cemetery, San Fernando, La Union after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Chapel in Pindangan, San Fernando, La Union.

Our Dearly Beloved

MERCEDES RICARDA ALBAN SERRANO

OF AGOO, LA UNION

Died in Bethesda, Maryland, USA on November 23, 2002 at the age of 99, widow of the late Bartolome R. Serrano of Luna, La Union.

Her bereaved children, **Benita S. Querubin** (deceased), **Julia S. Cuevo**, **Lura A. Serrano**, **Bartolome A. Serrano, Jr.**, **Bernardo A. Serrano** & **Salvador A. Serrano**, in-laws, **Ambassador Ernesto A. Querubin**, **Dr. Nemesio G. Cuevo** (deceased), **Erlinda Q. Serrano**, **Leny Y. Serrano** & **Estrella A. Serrano**, 16 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

ALICE DORIA-GAMILLA

Composer of the internationally famous love song **"A Million Thanks to You"** passed away on November 24, 2002 at the age of 71.

Her loving children **JOEY**, **JOEL**, **JONAR** and **JONEL**; children-in-law **SHIRLEY**, **LILIAN** and **CORIE**; grandchildren and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Chapel O, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Thursday, November 28, 2002 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City at 1:00 pm.

Roderico S. Munsayac, Sr.

Died peacefully on November 24, 2002
at the age of 69.

His loving wife **Victoria**, children and spouses **Rodel**, **Raul** and **Margie**, **Rod** and **Elchie**, **Rosanne** and **Bong**, **Rogel** and **Grace**, **Rhoda** and grandchildren **Ricamarie**, **Ronwald**, **Genesis** and **Abby**, **Trish** and **Bren**, **Reigel**, **Renz** and brothers, **Paquito** and **Rene** request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington East Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Ave. cor. Mercedes Ave. San Miguel, Pasig City. Tel. Nos. 747-8599 / 8609.

Interment will be on Thursday, November 28, 2002 at the Manila North Cemetery.

> **"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."** Matthew 10:39

In Loving Memory
on the
1st Death Anniversary
of

SOLEDAD T. OFLARIA

(of Nagcarlan, Laguna and Project 6, Q.C.)

November 13, 1907 - November 26, 2001

Beloved **NANAY** to (†) **Teresita Noemi**, **Neftali** and **Mila**, **Aleli** and **Manny**, **Josefina** and **Azur**; and doting **LOLA** to Lucilyn and Wenny, Ronilet, Edmund, Rowena, Allan and Dolly, Junior and April, Eva and great grandchildren Jardynne, John Phillip, Lanz Daniel and Louise Marie.

Holy Mass will be offered at the following churches:

The Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Essex, England	9:30 a.m.
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Project 6, Q.C.	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Cubao, Q.C.	6:00 a.m.
Sto. Domingo Church, Q.C.	6:00 a.m.
Sta. Cruz Church, Manila	6:00 a.m.
Quiapo Church, Manila	6:00 a.m.

Please pray for the eternal repose of the soul of LOLA CHOLENG.

PEDRO R. MARASIGAN

of Alitagtag, Batangas & Davao City

peacefully joined our Lord
on November 24, 2002 at age of 67.

His loving wife **FRANCIA**, sister **Leona**, children **Marthy & Teresa**, **Minetta & Raul**, **John Nathaniel & Romina**, grandchildren **Iza**, **Ica**, **Ian**, **Ino**, **Ina** and **Athena**.

His remains lie in state at Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapel, Paterno Rm. at Camus Extension cor. Jose Abad Santos St., Davao City.

Interment will be announced later.

We lovingly remember
our dearly beloved

MARGARITA L. GEMPERLE

(† November 27, 1996)
on her 6th Death Anniversary

Holy Mass is being offered on Wednesday, November 27, 2002 at the following churches:

St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish Magallanes Village, Makati City	6:15 AM, 7:00 AM & 6:00 PM
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park	6:00 PM
St. John Bosco Parish, Makati City	12:15 PM
San Ildefonso Parish, Pio del Pilar, Makati City	6:30 PM
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus San Antonio Village, Makati City	6:00 PM
St. Columban Church, Olongapo City	4:30 PM
St. Joseph Parish (Bamboo Organ), Las Piñas	6:00 AM
Shrine of Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life Pope John Paul II Youth Center	5:30 PM
Our Lady of Sorrows Church, F.B. Harrison, Pasay City	6:00 AM
Our Lady of Remedies, Malate Church	7:00 PM
St. Jerome & Sta. Susana Parish, Ayala Alabang	6:00 AM, 12:15 PM & 6:00 PM
St. James Parish, Ayala Alabang	6:20 AM & 6:30 PM
Presentation of the Child Jesus Parish BF Homes, Parañaque City	6:00 AM, 6:45 AM & 7:00 PM
Parish Church of Resurrection BF Homes, Parañaque	5:30 AM, 6:30 AM & 6:30 PM
Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy Mandaluyong City	6:00 AM

The family requests relatives, friends and readers to remember her in prayer.

ARTEMIO T. KHO, Sr.

Peacefully joined our Creator
on November 24, 2002 at the age of 68.

His wife **Nelida (Inday)**; children **Artemio Jr. & Elizabeth**, **Adela & JR**, **TK**, **Carmel & Joseph**, **Manuel Luis & Lorena**; grandchildren **Kookai**, **Patricia**, **Nica**, **Beatrix** and **Louise** and all relatives request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Good Shepherd Memorial Chapel, Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will be on Thursday, November 28, 2002, at Good Shepherd Memorial Park, Dolores, San Ferananda, Pampanga.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City • Tels. 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027
ARLINGTON EAST
THE GARDEN CHAPELS
C. Raymundo St. cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A.B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan • Tels. (0705) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Ceb • Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City • Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City, Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
DAYAO FUNERAL HOME
#2 Bayani St., Galas, Quezon City; Tels. 740-2683; 781-3706; 781-3688; 413-9400; 715-5594
DALLUAY MEMORIAL SERVICES
#42 Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City • Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 811-1086; (047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City • Tel. 894-5932 to 34
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Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102, 741-5125; 741-5133; Fax No. 711-3064
FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
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FUNERARIA PANGILINAN
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PAKET SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City • Tels. 646-1725; 646-1730
FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
No. 67 Pasig Boulevard Extension, Pasig City; Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735
M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila • Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas • Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024
FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City • Tels. 890-3556; 899-8191
FUNERARIA TUASON
Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan 3011 • Tels. (044) 764-0281; 678-0266; (0917) 895-0603
FUNERARIA SAMSON
145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite; Tels. (046) 471-3375; 471-2675
GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-6181 to 82
HERITAGE PARK
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila • Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42;
(TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112
HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Sucat, Parañaque City • Tels. 825-1296, 825-1291
LA FUNERARIA LAWRENCE BAQUIRAN
#27 Crisologo St., Vigan, Ilocos Sur • Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5880136; (0917) 5880145
Manila #23 Palo St., Project 2, Quezon City; Tel. 434-3258
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
1501 C.M. Recto Ave. cor. T. Mapua, Manila • Tels. 711-6931 to 35; 732-4795; 732-2827
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City • Tels. 749-3806 to 11; 712-3001; 743-6502 or 05
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque • Tels. 820-1592; 825-9947; 825-8835
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
79 Naguilan Rd., Baguio City • Tel. (074) 443-3337; (074) 442-3117
LA FUNERARIA SAPINOSO
G. Tirona St., Imus, Cavite; Tels. (046) 471-3386; (046) 471-4417; (046) 571-1978
LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City; Tels. 895-1011 to 19
LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK CHAPELS & CREMATORY SERVICES
Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Avenue, Tañong, Marikina City
Tels. 941-3196 to 98, 941-3676 • Telefax 941-3577
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74-M Naval Street, Tangos, Navotas, Metro Manila • Tel. No. 283-1618
MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Marcos Hiway, Antipolo, Rizal • Tels. 645-1855; 682-0209; 682-0210
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Arellano St., Dagupan City • Tels. (075) 515-5960; 515-6529; 522-6783; (0919) 348-7131
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214 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila • Tel. Nos. 254-0867, 254-0839
ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Ground Flr. Rolling Hills Chapel, 27th-Lacson St., Mandalagan, Bacolod City • Tel. 433-7132
RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
438 Cementina St., Pasay City • Tels. 831-1204
Sucat Branch: 8187 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City
Tels. 826-1376, 826-9682; (0915) 712-1220
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City • Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City • Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City • Tels. 852-8228; 852-7204
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila • Tels. 749-3679; 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
298 Quezon Ave., Quezon City • Tels. 372-5084; 410-9286/87
VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue 517-A Arnaiz St., Pasay City • Tels. 831-3797; 844-7846; 843-1801; 845-4836
WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila • Tels. 522-6840; 522-8438; 400-5394

BMHI
BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc.

INVITATION TO BID

The **BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc. (BMHI)** shall conduct a second public bidding for the sale of a Bell 230 Helicopter at the BCDA Corporate Center, Gozar Street, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

DESCRIPTION

Model : **Bell 230 (8-seater)**
Year Manufactured : **1993**
Body Color : **April Green Metallic**
With ***Global Positioning System KLN 90B and 4 Tube Electronic Flight Information System with Autopilot***

List of other installed equipment is available upon written request addressed to:

The Head, Technical Working Committee
Special Bids and Awards Committee for the Sale/Disposal of Bell 230 Helicopter
BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc.
Gozar corner Lucas Streets
Villamor Airbase, Pasay City

GENERAL GUIDELINES

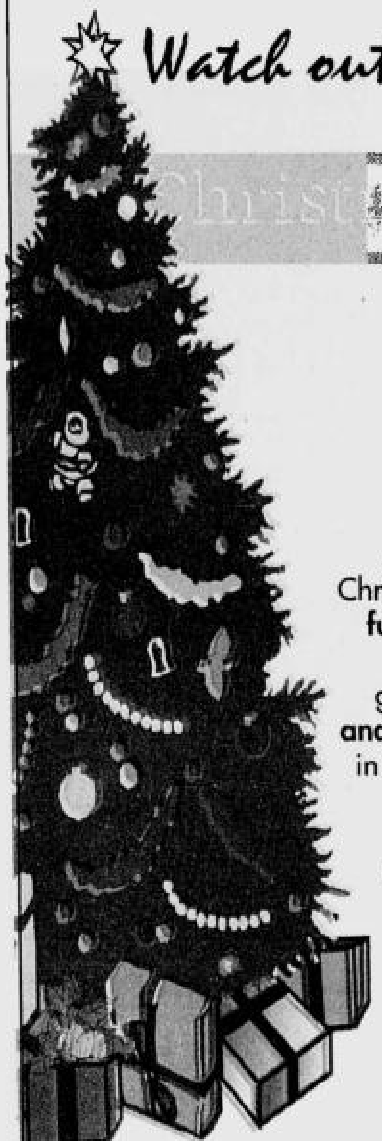
1. Interested parties can secure a copy of the Terms of Reference for a non-refundable nominal fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000) from the Office of the Head of the Technical Working Committee from November 20 to 28, 2002 (9:00 AM - 4:00 PM).
2. All interested parties are required to attend the Pre-Bid Conference to be held on December 3, 2002 at 9:00 AM, Unit 6B South Tower, Pacific Plaza Towers, Pacific Avenue, Bonifacio Global City.
3. BMHI reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, or to waive any defect or informality thereon or minor deviations, which do not affect the substance and validity of any or all of the proposals.

For more information, please call Roberto C. Atmosfera, Head, Technical Working Committee for the Sale/Disposal of the Bell 230 Helicopter, at Tel. Nos. **510-0426** and **551-3006** local **106**.

SBAC-BH CHAIRMAN

(PDI – Nov. 19 & 26, 2002)

Watch out for...



christmas classifieds

Christmas is just around the corner and the time for shopping and gift giving has come. On **December 1, 2002,** Inquirer Classifieds will release a special supplement entitled **"Christmas Classifieds"** featuring Christmas special offers on **electronics, home furnishing, automotive** and other **specialty shops**. Included as well are holiday gimmicks of **credit card companies, hotels and restaurants** within the Metro. Circulated in Metro Manila and backed up by the most read broadsheet in the land, the special promises to be a most cost efficient and effective venture.

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Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
4th JUDICIAL REGION
Branch 47
Palawan

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
- *Versus* -
HEIRS OF CORNELIO MIGUEL,
Defendant,
x---x
CIVIL CASE NO. 3691
For: EMINENT DOMAIN

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
- *Versus* -
LOURDES M. MANALO,
Defendant,
x---x
CIVIL CASE NO. 3692
For: EMINENT DOMAIN

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
- *Versus* -
HEIRS OF JOVENCIO MIGUEL
Namely: CHEMI M. SATO, ET. AL.,
Defendants,
x---x
CIVIL CASE NO. 3693
For: EMINENT DOMAIN

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

To HEIRS OF CORNELIO MIGUEL, LOURDES M. MANALO, HEIRS OF JOVENCIO MIGUEL namely: CHEMI M. SATO, JESSIE MIGUEL, EDEN MIGUEL and MICHIE MIGUEL

WHEREAS, a verified Complaint was filed by the NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC), thru the Solicitor General, against the HEIRS OF CORNELIO MIGUEL, LOURDES M. MANALO, and HEIRS OF JOVENCIO MIGUEL namely: CHEMI M. SATO, JESSIE MIGUEL, EDEN MIGUEL and MICHIE MIGUEL, which is quoted as follows:

COMPLAINT

"Plaintiff National Power Corporation (NPC), by Counsel, respectfully avers that:

1. Plaintiff is a government-owned and controlled corporation created and existing by virtue of Republic Act No. 6395, as amended, with principal office address at NPC Office Building Complex cor. Quezon Avenue and Agham Road, East Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, where it may be served with court processes;

2. A Civil Case No. 3691

Defendant Heirs of Cornelio Miguel are all of legal ages, Filipinos and are named hereunder together with their residence and postal/office address where they may be served with summons and other court processes or through their authorized representatives;

x x x

2-4. Lourdes M. Manalo - said to reside somewhere in the USA, hence, service of summons by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Sec. 17 of Rule 14. Her last known address is Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City;

x x x

2-6. Heirs of Angel Miguel namely;

x x x

2-6-10 Ma. Corinna M. Quicho - Zurich, Switzerland, hence, service of summons by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Sec. 17 of Rule 14. Her last known address is Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City.

2-7. Heirs of Jovencio Miguel namely;
2-7-1. Chiemi M. Sato
2-7-2. Jessie Miguel
2-7-3. Eden Miguel
2-7-4. Michie Miguel

Who are all said to reside at Kansas City, USA hence, service of summons by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Sec. 17 of Rule 14. Their last known address is 156 Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City;

2-8. Heirs of Rodello Miguel namely:
2-8-1. Sonny Miguel
2-8-2. Ruby M. Palattao

Who are all said to reside at San Francisco, California, USA, hence, service of summons by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Sec. 17 of Rule 14. Their last known address is 156 Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City;

2-9 And unknown others, to whom service of summons by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Sec. 16 of Rule 14;

2.B Civil Case No. 3692

Defendant Lourdes M. Manalo is of legal age, Filipino and is said to reside somewhere in the United States, hence, service of summons by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Sec. 17 of Rule 14. Her last known address is Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City;

2.C Civil Case No. 3693

Defendants, Heirs of Jovencio Miguel, are all said to be of legal ages, US citizens and are said to reside somewhere at Kansas City, USA, hence, substitute service by publication may be resorted to pursuant to Section 17 of Rule 14;

3. Plaintiff NPC was created for the purpose of undertaking the development of hydro-electric generation power production of electricity from any and all sources and particularly the construction, operation, and maintenance of power plants, auxiliary plants, dams, reservoirs, pipes, mains, transmission lines, power station and substations, and other works for the purpose of developing hydraulic power from any river, lake, creek, spring and waterfalls in the Philippines and supplying such power to the inhabitants thereof, and to carry out these purposes, plaintiff NPC is authorized by the law creating it, RA 6395 as amended, to enter private property in the lawful performance of its business purposes, provided that the owners of such private property shall be indemnified for any actual damage caused thereby, and to exercise the right of eminent domain;

4.A Civil Case No. 3691

Defendants - heirs of Cornelio Miguel are the legal owners of a parcel of land situated at Brgy. Tiniguiban, Puerto Princesa City, Province of Palawan as shown in the attached Tax Declaration No. 061-6851 marked as Annex "A" and TCT-4253 copy of which is attached as Annex "B", more particularly described below together with the affected area sought to be expropriated and the corresponding BIR zonal value, per attached copy of BIR zonal valuation marked as Annex "C", to wit:

OWNER	TITLE NO.	TAX DEC NO./ LOT NO.	TOTAL AREA	AREA AFF'D IN SQ.M	ASSESSED VALUE OF AREA AFFECTED	VALUE BASED ON BIR ZONAL VALUATION	CLASSIFICATION OF LAND
CORNELIO MIGUEL	4253	TD NO. 061-6851 LOT NO. 2-1 (LRC) Psd-146879	2,132 sq.m.	112.35 sq.m. more or less	P13,064.65	P31,978.4	Residential

4.B Civil Case No. 3692

Defendant is the legal owner of a parcel of land situated at Brgy. Tiniguiban, Puerto Princesa City, Province of Palawan as shown in the attached Tax Declaration No. 061-6858 marked as Annex "A" and TCT No. T-4194 copy of which is attached as Annex "B", more particularly described below together with the affected area sought to be expropriated and the corresponding BIR zonal valuation, per attached copy of BIR zonal valuation marked as Annex "C"; to wit:

OWNER	TITLE NO.	TAX DEC NO./ LOT NO.	TOTAL AREA	AREA AFF'D IN SQ.M	ASSESSED VALUE OF AREA AFFECTED	VALUE BASED ON BIR ZONAL VALUATION	CLASSIFICATION OF LAND
LOURDES M. MANALO	4194	TD NO. 061-6858 OT NO. I-E (LRC) Psd-146879	6,136 sq.m.	26.04 sq.m. more or less	P426.07	P7,167.00	Residential

4.C Civil Case No. 3693

Defendants are the legal owners of a parcel of land situated at Brgy. Tiniguiban, Puerto Princesa City, Province of Palawan as shown in the attached Tax Declaration marked as Annex "A", TCT No. T – 4208 copy of which is attached by Annex "B" and more particularly described below together with the affected area sought to be expropriated and the corresponding BIR Zonal Value, per attached copy of BIR Zonal Valuation marked as Annex "C"; to wit:

OWNER	TITLE NO.	TAX DEC NO./ LOT NO.	TOTAL AREA	AREA AFF'D IN SQ.M	ASSESSED VALUE OF AREA AFFECTED	VALUE BASED ON BIR ZONAL VALUATION	CLASSIFICATION OF LAND
Heirs of Jovencio Miguel	4208	TD No. 01-6856 Lot No. I-H-Psd-146789	2,729	234.4 2 sq.m. more or or less	P7,032.60	P64,455.50	Residential

5. To enable the plaintiff to construct and maintain its 13.8 kv Puerto Princesa Diesel Power Plant (PPDPP)-Irawan Substation by-pass Line, a project for public purpose, it is both necessary and urgent for plaintiff to acquire a portion of the above parcel of land consisting of a total area of 234.42 sq.m., more or less, shown and shaded in the attached sketch plan marked as Annex "D" and made integral part hereof;

6. The above-described parcel of land sought to be expropriated has not been applied to nore expropriated for any public use and is selected by plaintiff in a manner compatible with the greatest public good and the least private injury;

7. Plaintiff has attempted to negotiate with the defendants for the acquisition of a portion of the above parcel of land for the public purpose as above-stated at a price prescribed by law, but failed to reach an agreement with them for they are said to reside at an unknown place at Kansas City, USA.

8. Pursuant to Section 2 of Rule 67 of the 1997 Rules on Civil Procedure, upon the filing in the proper court of the complaint in eminent domain proceeding or at any time thereafter, and after due notice to the defendants, plaintiff shall have the right to take or enter upon the possession of the real properties involved if it deposits with the authorized government depository an amount equivalent to the assessed value of the property for purposes of taxation to be held by said bank subject to the orders of the court while pursuant to RA 8974, Section 4 (a), upon the filing of the complaint, and after due notice to the defendant, the implementing agency shall immediately pay the owner of the property the amount equivalent to the sum of (1) one hundred percent (100%) of the value of the property based on the current relevant zonal valuation of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR); and (2) the value of the improvements and/or structures as determined under Section 7 hereof, x x x Upon compliance with the guidelines above mentioned, the court shall immediately issue to the implementing agency an order to take possession of the property and start the implementation of the project;

9. Considering that the BIR zonal Valuation is more favorable to the landowner, plaintiff is willing to deposit that amount in an authorized government depository bank for purposes of the issuance of the corresponding writ of possession, subject to the orders and final disposition of the Court in accordance with Section 2, Rule 67 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, Section 4 of RA 8974 and in line with the Decision of the Supreme Court in the case of National Power Corporation vs. Hon. Enrique T. Jocson, et. AL; G.R. Nos. 94193-99, February 25, 1992.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, plaintiff most respectfully prays of this Honorable Court that:

1.A. Civil Case No. 3691

In the event that defendant refuse to allow plaintiff to enter and undertake the construction of its project in spite of the deposit made and the Notice to Take Possession pursuant to Section 2 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure and Section 4 of RA 8974 this Honorable Court issue an Order or Writ of Possession authorizing plaintiff to enter and take possession and control and acquire the portion of the property consisting of 112.35 sq.m. more or less, described in paragraphs 4 and 5 hereof, together with the improvements, sought to be expropriated with the power and authority to demolish all improvements existing thereof and to commence and undertake the construction of the 13.8 KV PPDPP -- Irawan Substation by-pass Line on the said property.

1.B Civil Case No. 3692

In the event that the defendant refuse to allow plaintiff to enter and undertake the construction of its project in spite of the deposit made and the Notice to Take Possession pursuant to Section 2 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure and Section 4 of RA 8974 this Honorable Court issue an Order or Writ of Possession authorizing plaintiff to enter and take possession and control and acquire the portion of the property consisting of 26.04 sq.m. more or less, described in paragraphs 4 and 5 hereof, together with the improvements, sought to be expropriated with the power and authority to demolish all improvements existing thereof and to commence and undertake the construction of the 13.8 kV PPDPP – Irawan Substation by-pass Line on the said property;

1.C. Civil Case No. 3693

In the event that defendant refuse to allow plaintiff to enter and undertake the construction of its project in spite of the deposit made and the Notice to Take Possession pursuant to Section 2 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure and Section 4 of RA 8974 this Honorable Court issue an Order or Writ of Possession authorizing plaintiff to enter and take possession and control and acquire the portion of the property consisting of 234.42 sq.m. more or less, described in paragraphs 4 and 5 hereof, together with the improvements, sought to be expropriated with the power and authority to demolish all improvements existing thereof and to commence and undertake the construction of the 13.8 kV PPDPP – Iran Substation by-pass Line on the said property;

2. Should the defendants fail to submit an answer within the time specified in the summons, or when the defendants fail to defend as required by the Rules of Court, to forthwith issue an Order of Expropriation condemning the property together with its improvements sought to be expropriated, for public use or purpose described in the Complaint;

3. Not more than three (3) Commissioners be appointed by the Court to hear the parties, view the premises, assess the damage and report to the court the just compensation to be paid to defendants pursuant to Rule 67;

4. After the determination of the just compensation, to authorize the payment thereof by plaintiff to defendants after deducting the sums due to the Government for unpaid real estate taxes and other imposts;

5. Plaintiff be adjudged by this Honorable Court to have a lawful right to enter, take possession and acquire the portion of the property together with the improvements sought to be expropriated for the purpose stated, free from any and all liens and encumbrances, as stated in the Complaint.

Plaintiff prays for such other and further reliefs as are deemed just and equitable under the premises.

Quezon City for Puerto Princesa City, August 21, 2002.

FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL:
Sgd. RAINIER V. BUTALID
VP-General Counsel
IBP No. 556090, 2/18/02-Masbate
PTR No. 31289331, 2/18/02, Q.C

Sgd. JOSEPH F.M. DECHAVEZ
Sr. Department Manager
Land & Land Rights Management Group
Special Attorney, OSG
IBP No. 556343, 2/20/02, Sorsogon
PTR No. 31207882, 2/20/02, Quezon City

Sgd. LUIS MANUEL U. BUGAYONG
Department Manager
Real Estate Documentation Department
Land & Land Rights Management Group
Special Attorney, OSG
IBP No. 557372, 3/6/02, Pangasinan
PTR No. 31751998, 3/6/02, Quezon City

Sgd. JEAN LOU N. AGUILAR
Corporate Attorney B
Special Attorney-OSG
IBP No. 502940, 12/26/01 Palawan
PTR No. 4399829, 4/02/02 Manila

Counsel for Plaintiff
National Power Corporation
Cor. Agham Road and Quezon Avenue
Diliman, Quezon City

VERIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
PUERTO PRINCESA CITY) S.S.

I, MR. ROMUALDO A. CONSIGNA, after having been duly sworn to in accordance with law, hereby depose and say that:

1. I am the Project Manager of Palawan Backbone Transmission Project of the National Power Corporation, plaintiff in this case;

2. I have caused the preparation of the foregoing Complaint and have read and understood all the allegations contained therein, and the same is true and correct of my knowledge;

3. I certify under oath that-

a) the plaintiff has not commenced any other action or proceeding which is pending in the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, or any other Tribunal or agency;

b) to the best of my knowledge, no such action or proceeding is pending in the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, or any other tribunal or agency;

4. I likewise undertake that-

a) If there is any other action or proceeding which is either pending or may have been terminated, I will state the status thereof;

b) If I should thereafter learn that a similar action or proceeding has been filed or is pending before the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, or any other tribunal or Agency, I will undertake to report the fact within five (5) days therefrom to the court of agency wherein the original pleading and sworn certification contemplated in Administrative Circular No. 04-94 dated February 8, 1994.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my signature this 21st day of August 2002, in Puerto Princesa City, Philippines.

Sgd. ROMUALDO A. CONSIGNA
Affiant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 21st day of August 2002, affiant exhibited to me his Community Tax Certificate No. 01854722 issued at Manila on February 27, 2002.

Sgd. JEAN LOU N. AGUILAR
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2003
IBP No. 502940, 12/26/01, Palawan
PTR No. 4399829, 04/02/02, PPC

Doc. No. 221
Page No. 46
Book No. 01
Series of 2002.

WHEREAS, on October 18, 2002, Summons were issued by the Court to the above-mentioned defendants, which Sheriff Paul Gabayan tried to serve to all the defendants at the given addresses.

WHEREAS, Plaintiff through Counsel filed a motion asking for leave of Court to serve summons upon the defendants whose whereabouts are unknown, by way of publication in the newspaper pursuant to Sections 16 and 17 of Rule 14 of the 1997 Rules of Court.

WHEREAS, the Court granted said motion in its Order dated October 18, 2002, which reads as follows.

"ORDER"

"Pursuant to Sec. 17 of Rule 14 of the Rules of Court the Ex-Parte Motion to Service Summons by Publication in the above-captioned cases is hereby granted. Thus, AS PRAYED FOR leave of Court is hereby granted for service of summons by publication to the following named persons who are non-residents and cannot be found in the Philippines:

1) Heirs of Cornelio Miguel
   1.1 Lourdes Miguel Manila
   1.2 Ma. Corinna Miguel-Quicho
   1.3 Chemi Miguel-Sato
   1.4 Jessie Miguel
   1.5 Eden Miguel
   1.6 Michie Miguel
   1.7 Sonny Miguel
   1.8 Ruby Miguel-Palattao
2. Heirs of Jovencio Miguel
   2.1 Chemi Miguel-Sato - Kansas City, USA
   2.2 Jessie Miguel - -do-
   2.3 Eden Miguel - -do-
   2.4 Michie Miguel - -do-
3. Lourdes Miguel Manalo

Likewise, considering that the plaintiff is not totally familiar with all the descendants of Cornelio Miguel, service to those others who may claim to be the heirs of said persons is granted pursuant to Sec. 16 of Rule 14, Rules of Court.

SO ORDERED"

NOW, THEREFORE, you Defendants: Heirs of Cornelio Miguel, Lourdes Miguel Manalo, Ma. Corinna Miguel-Quicho, Chemi Miguel-Sato, Jessie Miguel, Eden Miguel, Michie Miguel, Sonny Miguel, Ruby Miguel-Palattao, and all others who may claim to be the heirs of said persons, are hereby required to file with the Office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court of Palawan, 4th Judicial Region, Branch 47, Puerto Princesa City answers or responsive pleadings to the Complaint of the Plaintiff, within sixty (60) days from the date of the last portion hereof, or after notice, whichever comes first and to furnish copies of your answers to the Plaintiff through the Solicitor General with address c/o Atty. Jean Lou N. Aguilar, Special Attorney, National Power Corporation (NPC), Palawan Backbone Transmission Project, 108 Manalo St., Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. If you fail to file your answer to the Complaint within the designated time herein, plaintiff shall take judgement against you and shall demand from the Court the relief prayed for in the Complaint, after hearing.

WITNESS, the Hon. Perfecto E. Pe, Presiding Judge of this Court, this 28th day of October 2002.
Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

NORFERIO B. NONO
Clerk of Court

(PDI–Nov. 12, 19 & 26, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines

PROCUREMENT SERVICE

Inter-Agency Bids and Awards Committee

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS) invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the LEASE OF DATA WAREHOUSE SERVER AND LEASE OF WAREHOUSE STORAGE AND LEASE OF AUTOMATED TAPE LIBRARY for the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The approved budget for this contract is P 64,610,000.00.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference that will be held on December 4, 2002, 9:00 a.m. at the PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.

The bid documents shall be available at the PS-PURCHASING DIVISION starting November 19, 2002 upon payment of non-refundable fee of Seven Thousand Pesos (Php 7,000.00).

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on December 19, 2002 at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, please call the PS-Purchasing Division at telephone nos. 563-94-02 or 563-93-74.

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI--November 19 & 26, 2002)

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AT: HENRY BUTCHER AUCTION CENTER
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INQUIRER

TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Welcome rug

Q. Who began the practice of rolling out the red carpet to welcome important people?

A. By some accounts, when an important visitor was received at a hotel or other public place, a special red carpet was traditionally unrolled at the entrance. But since the term dates only from the 1930s, it may have a more specific source: the red carpet that led passengers to the Twentieth Century Limited, for many years the elite train between New York and Chicago, and probably the best-known train in the United States. The Twentieth Century was a first-class Pullman (a railroad car with small private rooms or seats that can be made up into berths for sleeping, named for its inventor, George Pullman) and both its accommodations and its dining-car menus were considered the height of luxury.

Take a Tip. Carpet troubleshooting: *mud* — sprinkle cornstarch on damp spot, give the cornstarch at least 15 minutes to soak up the mud, then vacuum up and away; *chewing gum* - press ice cubs until it becomes brittle and breaks off, then use a spot remover to vanquish last traces; *glue* — loosen by saturating the spot with a cloth soaked in vinegar; *ballpoint ink marks* — saturate the spot with hairspray, allow to dry, then brush lightly with a solution of water and vinegar.

Past Forward. This week in 1963: The world was in mourning at the news that US President John F. Kennedy had been shot and killed (November 22) in Dallas, Texas. The 46-year-old President and Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy were in Texas, on the latest leg of a tour of the southern states to gather support for the Democratic Party. The fatal shooting occurred as the presidential motorcade swept through Dealey Plaza in downtown Dallas.

WORD WATCH

Luksa : from the Sanskrit *ruksa*, 'unkempt (as one in mourning).'

PDI -- November 26, 2002

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Guimaras
Municipality of Jordan

Loan Agreement # PH-P200

INVITATION TO BID

The Republic of the Philippines, through the Department of Education, has received an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the amount of P1,749 million (Y7,210 million) towards the financing of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) dated December 28, 1999. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments for the new construction and/or repair of different school buildings located at TVC-STA TERESA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, STA. TERESA, JORDAN, GUIMARAS. Disbursement of the ODA loan by the JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines and Procurement under "JBIC ODA Loans". No party other than the Department of Education shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claims to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As of the remaining portion, the agency will take appropriate measures for finance.

JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as DepEd-SEDIP under contracts funded with JBIC ODA loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC: 1. will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question; 2. will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for stated period of time, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIS ODA loans if it, at any time, determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt and fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract financed by JBIC ODA loans or other Japanese ODA.

Bidding is open to all Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB)- registered contractors or joint venture contractors with PCAB license category *B* with classification *Medium A*, General Building.

Bidders may obtain further information and acquire the bidding documents from:

The Bids and Award Committee
MUNICIPALITY OF JORDAN
Tel. Nos. 581-3445 / Telefax No. 581-3445

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting 20-29, 2002 until 5:00 p.m. of November, 2002 upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the above office and payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

Pre-bid conference shall be conducted on December 2, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. to be held at Jordan Session, Jordan, Guimaras.

Submission of bid together with all documents required in the bid documents must be delivered to the aforesaid venue on December 9, 2002, 10:00 a.m. at the Jordan Session Hall, Jordan, Guimaras. All bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of the bidders or their legally authorized representatives.

(Sgd.) FELIPE HILAN A. NAVA, M.D.
Municipal Mayor, BAC Chairman

(PDI - Nov. 14, 20 & 26, 2002)

National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Power Corporation (NPC) of the Republic of the Philippines invites all interested contractors to register for eligibility and to bid for the Rehabilitation of NPC Building No. 2, Roof Deck located at NPC Office Building Complex, Diliman, Quezon City.

The complete sets of eligibility screening documents are available for issuance at the Office of the Corporate Fuel Management Department (CFMD) and Secretariat Contracts Award Committee, Bldg., 2 Ground Floor, NPC-OBC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel/Fax No. 9245311, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of eight hundred pesos (P800.00) and presentation of Letter of Intent.

The bidding requirements and schedule of activities are as follows:

Contract Number	PRBD Lr-0337
Scope of Work:	Construction of Open-sided Hall; Re-waterproofing of roof deck and Repair of 3rd floor ceiling.
Approved Budget for Contract	P8,340,072.00
Category and Classification of Contractors' License	Category B General Building/Engineering Medium A: Building and Industrial Plants
Issuance of Eligibility Requirements/Documents	November 18, 2002
Deadline for Submission of Eligibility Requirements/ Documents	December 2, 2002
Issuance of Tender Documents	December 17, 2002
Pre-bid Conference	December 20, 2002
Submission of Bids and Bid Opening	January 03, 2003

Registered prospective bidders shall be evaluated as to eligibility based on a non-discretionary "pass-fail" criteria prescribed in the eligibility guidelines.

Bid documents shall be issued only to eligible bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.

The Contracts Award Committee (CAC), NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidder(s) or any obligation to inform the affected bidder(s) of the ground(s) for NPC's action.

(Sgd.) SILVANO C. ZANORIA
OIC-Senior Vice President and
Chairman, Contracts Award Committee
NPC-Residual

(PDI -- Nov. 19 & 26, 2002)

Ticket Prices: P1,000 / 750
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BUSINESS

Alvarez freezes equity provision in mining law

BAGUIO CITY—Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez on Saturday froze a controversial 1995 Philippine Mining Act provision that grants foreign investors full control over high-value mining projects in the Philippines.

Alvarez said he would adhere to the constitutional restriction that limits foreign ownership to 40 percent against the Filipino partner's 60-percent share in any joint venture or lease agreement in the country.

The mining law grants foreign investors up to 100 percent ownership for Financial and/or Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAAs) covering big mining ventures.

The Supreme Court is studying the constitutionality of the mining law's incentives for foreign investors, after the Legal and Natural Resources Center (LRC) questioned the mining act in 1995.

Alvarez said his decision to follow the 60:40 provision is part of the government's "environmental regimen" for the Philippine mining industry, which anti-mining groups should "continue trusting."

He made the announcement in a press conference during the 49th Mine Safety and Environment Conference.

Nelia Halcon, executive vice president of the Chamber of Mines, said the chamber launched on Thursday a 10-million signature campaign to match a letter campaign of the "Dapitan Initiative," a loose coalition of Filipino environmentalists and activists, that calls for the scrapping of the 1995 mining law.

Halcon said the industry manifesto that will result from the chamber's signature drive is part of a public relations campaign to promote the policy of "sustainable and responsible mining."

"Sustainable mining" is espoused by the Global Mining Initiative (GMI) led by the international mine firms Rio Tinto, Placer Dome, Western Mining Corp., Anglo-American, BHP Billiton, Newmont, Phelps Dodge, Noranda and Codelco.

In a Wednesday press briefing, Catalino Corpuz Jr., a Dapitan Initiative convenor, described the GMI as an image building project designed to lull the public into accepting new foreign-financed mine operations.

He also criticized Alvarez for supporting the GMI.

"When he was appointed environment secretary, we were hopeful that changes would take place in running the mines. But when he encountered difficulties during his confirmation, his true colors surfaced," Corpuz complained.

Alvarez said the anti-mining forces should "continue trusting me," because the government policies being applied on the industry do not veer away from the "environmental activism" now being practiced in the country.

The ghost of the disastrous Marcopper tailings spill incident in Marinduque in 1996 had been a major turning point for anti-mining activists in the country.

Since then, however, the mining industry has embarked on a serious transformation program to check its lapses. • *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Fitness

You may be drinking excess calories

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

WHEN you are trying to lose weight, you should be aware not only of the calories you eat, but also of the calories that you drink. This is a common weight loss mistake that many people make because liquid calories just aren't as obvious as food calories.

There are as many calories in a big tumbler of iced tea (made from a commercial mix) as there are in four cookies. Someone trying to lose weight would have enough sense to avoid the cookies but may think nothing of guzzling down the iced tea. The average cookie is about 50 calories (so four of them are equivalent to 200 calories) and a 16-ounce tumbler of iced

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Get that winning smile

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Randy Hormillosa

RECEPTION area

CLIENTS can make special requests, such as getting a massage, while undergoing laser whitening treatment.

Dental laser whitening is faster and more convenient than other teeth-bleaching methods

AN irresistibly infectious smile can brighten up a room and lift the spirit. But while a smile is all it takes to chase the blues away, the mood can be quickly ruined if a set of yellow-stained teeth is revealed. *Pogi/ganda* points plummet downhill faster than one can mutter "hi."

Now comes Perfect Smile, the country's first and only dental salon specializing in laser whitening, to ensure that a smile is always a winner minus the hassle of traditional bleaching. Located at 3/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City, the dental salon is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, at par with American standards. It has provided services to many local celebrities and personalities, business executives, politicians and just about anybody.

Services do not only cover the teeth. Clients can even get a massage during treatment at no extra charge. They can also choose the background music.

Since eating is not allowed one hour after the treatment, food and drinks are served before one's appointment with the dentist. The staff of Perfect Smile will gladly get whatever food is required by those who have to observe certain restrictions.

Dental laser whitening is better than other teeth-bleaching methods because it is faster and more convenient. After an hour-and-a-half—two hours at most—for a treatment, a client can walk out of the salon grinning from ear to ear. And for a good reason: laser whitening is the only procedure that can whiten the teeth for up to eight shades.

Compare that to using bleaching gels, which takes weeks, even months in some cases, to produce a satisfactory result—only three to four shades lighter—or brushing with a whitening solution to make the teeth a shade or two lighter.

Thorough checkup

However, the pearly whites only a laser can produce come with a hefty price tag—between P18,000 and P25,000—depending on how severe the case. Rest assured though that Perfect Smile gives each client's teeth a thorough checkup before the procedure. Besides, the results are well worth it. "We haven't had a dissatisfied client yet," says general manager Tina Caparas.

Before the procedure, a dentist first checks the teeth for cavities, chips, etc. He then performs the prophylaxis or cleaning to prepare the teeth for the laser. (Blue laser light at controlled heat waves, by the way, is used, not the red-hot type people see in the movies smoothly slicing through metal.)

The laser actually beams directly on the whitening gel, not the teeth. The heat generated from the laser mechanically activates the whitening agent in the gel, speeding up the whitening process. Each tooth gets a maximum exposure to the laser of 30 seconds before the dentist meticulously proceeds to work on the rest—tooth per tooth.

Occasionally, the salon gets clients with sensitive teeth. In this case, a second trip is required to finish the job. People with sensitive teeth experience a tingling sensation, similar to biting on ice till the teeth get that thermal sensitivity. So far, Caparas says the salon has had only three clients with sensitive teeth since it opened a year ago.

For maintenance, clients can either opt for designer toothpaste available at the salon or get from local drugstores. Genetics and lifestyle do play a role in keeping the teeth gleaming white. Consumption of certain substances, such as tea, coffee or red wine, can also stain the teeth. Smoking doesn't help either. Due to different factors, the effects can last anywhere from six months to one year, after which a periodic booster treatment is required.

Safety

Although laser whitening is a relatively new technology, introduced in the US market just five years ago, the process is USFDA-approved for safety. Caparas says fears of developing brittle teeth or damaging nerves after the procedure should be set aside. "The laser doesn't touch the enamel and dentin so the treatment is perfectly safe for all healthy adults," she says.

Laser whitening also has the least side effects among teeth-whitening options. Unlike conventional bleaching, exposure to chemicals is very quick with laser whitening. Since laser whitening is professionally controlled and is limited to the teeth, the chances of ingesting bleaching chemicals are also dramatically reduced.

The only known side effect of laser whitening is a thermal sensitivity for anything extremely hot or cold, a condition that is totally reversible and disappears after 24 hours. By comparison, the side effects of other teeth whitening methods—since patients are regularly exposed to bleaching chemicals for longer periods—range from gum irritation, sore throat and tooth pain to headaches and teeth sensitivity.

To mark Perfect Smile's first anniversary, all laser whitening prices will drop to P15,000 for 30 days starting Nov. 30. Call 892-9398/9941 or e-mail info@oneperfectsmile.com.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

Gym glam

BENCH loose-fit with cut comb on shoulders and hemline and Bench parachute loose-fit pants

WHENEVER Robby Mananquil—artist, image model and aspiring actor—feels the need to kick back, he goes to the gym. That's also the secret to his toned body.

Whether releasing the day's tension with a round in a boxing ring or burning off some calories at the stationary bike, Robby is garbed in casual, comfortable Bench clothes.

His simple, no-fuss, no-frills fashion sense serves him well on his trips to the gym.

After all, nothing works like Bench cotton tees when you want to be physical.

BENCH roundeck tee with embroidery and print on chest and Bench parachute loose-fit pants

BENCH 100% nylon jacket with chest zip on front, Bench roundneck tee (inner shirt) and Bench Boston khaki

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THE Adventure teams with Paolo Bediones

Trivia pursuit becomes texting adventure

GLOBE Telecom gives Filipino reality-TV buffs a chance to win over P3 million in cash prizes and three Ford Sport Trac SUV's through its "Great Globe Adventure" promo, which will run until December.

The promo runs concurrent with the airing of the exciting and highly charged Great Globe Adventure adventure-texting game show hosted by Paolo Bediones and Michi Valeriano every Saturday at 8:30 p.m. over GMA-7.

Viewers have three ways to win through the Great Globe Adventure Trivia, the Great Globe Adventure Pop Quiz and the Grand Draw.

Both pre- and postpaid Globe Handyphone and Touch Mobile users can qualify to join in the interactive texting by simply texting "GREAT" to 2255 to receive the mechanics as well as the first trivia question. Every correct trivia question answered will automatically be awarded virtual raffle points.

Those who want to join the Great Globe Adventure Pop Quiz can watch the Great Globe Adventure reality-TV series and wait for three Pop Quiz questions that will be asked throughout the episode. Four lucky winners will be picked electronically every week for a chance to win Nokia 7650's or Siemens S57's.

In the Great Globe Adventure Trivia, Globe Handyphone and Touch Mobile users can join the daily draws any time, any day. Daily participants to the Great Globe Adventure Trivia game can win Nokia 3510's or Siemens C55's, while lucky weekly winners can win cash prizes from P250,000, P500,000, P750,000 to P1 million.

GREAT Globe Adventure's hosts Paolo Bediones and michi Valeriano

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Grand reunion of Del Mundo babies set Nov. 27

THE FE del Mundo Medical Center, formerly the Children's Medical Center of the Philippines, is inviting you to a reunion of all those who had been touched by the healing, nurturing and teaching hands of Dr. Fe del Mundo, the first Filipina national scientist, since she began her practice in Manila more than 50 years ago.

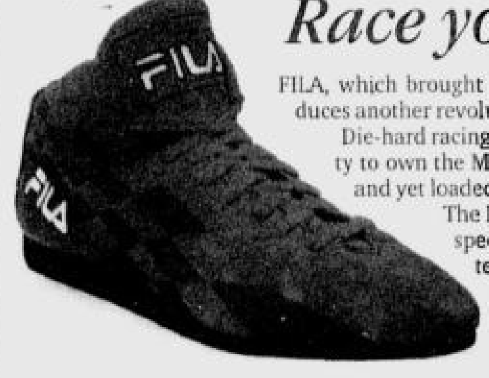
Dubbed "A Reunion of Fe del Mundo Babies," the event will be held on Nov. 27 at the hospital premises at No. 11 Banawe St., Quezon City. On that day, Dra. Del Mundo will be turning 91. It is also the hospital's 45th founding anniversary. As a tribute to a long life well lived in the service of others, particularly the children, Dra. Del Mundo will be serenaded by patients whom she had cared for as well and/or sick babies and by doctors whom she had taught basic and advanced pediatric medicine.

Expected to attend the reunion are Pops Fernandez, Aiza Seguerra, Snooky Serna, Isay Alvarez and other members of the entertainment industry who are or had been Fe del Mundo babies. Members of prominent clans whom Dra. Del Mundo also served as family pediatrician are also coming.

The Fe del Mundo Medical Center, through its Board of Trustees chairman Rafael Azanza and president Dr. Alendry P. Caviles, Jr., is requesting all those who were born, cared for or had trained as residents or fellows in the hospital, to register as Fe del Mundo babies so they can formally be invited to the grand reunion. The hospital is also encouraging all those who know other Fe del Mundo babies to invite them to register as well for the reunion and other succeeding activities.

"Fe del Mundo babies" who wish to register may visit the Fe del Mundo Medical Center or call 741-9198, 743-1818, 712-0845 local 178; E-mail: apcj76@yahoo.com. Look for Annalyn Imperial. Or the Pangarap Services Inc. c/o ISLA The Advocacy Channel, 4/F Caresma Bldg., No. 50 Polaris St., Bel-Air, Makati City, 757-3161/62, E-mail: abenskat@yahoo.com or myvoice@isla.ph. Look for Kathy Sula.

Race you to these shoes

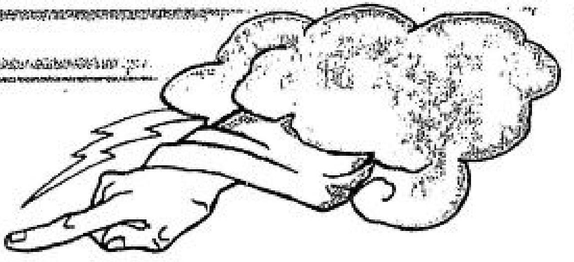


FILA, which brought to the world the Ferrari Replica shoe, now introduces another revolutionary shoe for racing.

Die-hard racing fans will now enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own the Michael Schumacher race shoe, touted to be so light and yet loaded with unique features.

The Michael Schumacher Fila racing shoe comes in two special designs. The Schumacher Red offers Fire Proof technology and is the actual shoe Michael uses. The Schumacher Black features the casual look design and modifications for after-game or casual use. Never before have the world's champion driver, the world's most-sought-after car manufacturer and a world-class footwear giant come together to produce the world's finest Race Shoe.

With very limited stocks, the Michael Schumacher Race shoe will be available starting this Christmas season in selected Fila stores. It will also be launched formally on Nov. 29 with a party and show at Mati at Rockwell's Power Plant mall.



Banished from the Garden again

INNER AWARENESS

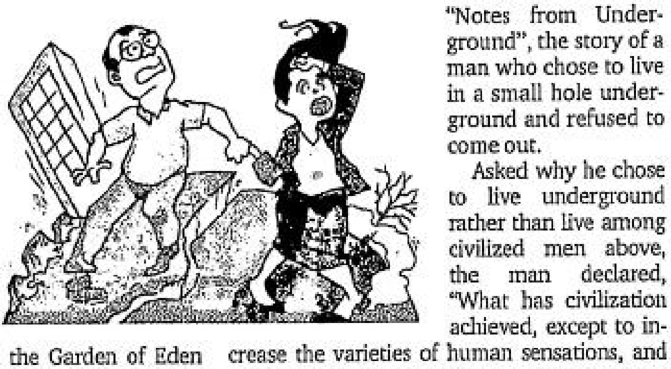
Jaime T. Licauco

AREN'T you wondering why natural disasters seem to be happening more frequently all over the planet compared to centuries before? More earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, floods and diseases than at any other time in human history?

On the physical level, scientists and seismologists explain that the reason for the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions is that, in time, tectonic plates underneath are moving in the earth's fault lines and the tremendous heat energy deep in the bowels of the earth builds up and later explodes. This is, of course, true.

But on another level, on a non-physical level, the natural disasters can also be explained in terms of the unabated abuses man has inflicted on Mother Earth in the guise of scientific progress and industrialization.

In trying to make sense of the many calamities that have befallen man, I suddenly saw a possible explanation in the legend of Adam and Eve as narrated in the Bible. When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, according to Genesis, he said to them, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die." (Gen. 2:16-17)



There had been many interpretations of what really happened in the Garden of Eden and what the Tree of Knowledge and its fruit stood for. Was it a real tree or a real fruit, or was it simply symbolic of something else? Some esoteric writers said it really referred to sex which, if properly done, could lead to cosmic consciousness or divine knowledge. Others said it could refer simply to forbidden or hidden knowledge or perhaps, even to deep scientific knowledge, for which man was not ready.

In his pride, man sought to attain the knowledge and wisdom of God. Ancient Greek mythology tells the story of young Icarus, son of Daedalus, who flew too close to the sun, despite being warned against doing that. Icarus' wings melted in the heat of the sun and he fell into the sea and drowned.

Modern man, like Icarus, has been trying to pursue knowledge reserved for God and has been burned in the process, without even realizing it.

When the Russian cosmonauts in their MIR space ship ventured too far into outer space, they were reported to have seen written in the dark skies the words, "You are invading the territory of God," or something to that effect. "Go back now," God seems to be saying to man, "go back to nature or suffer the consequences of your intransigence."

Every great visionary saw what was coming to man because of untold abuses against nature. Francis Bacon said, "Nature to be conquered must be obeyed." Rachel Carson foresaw the great destruction of Planet Earth in her prophetic book, "The Silent Spring," 50 years before it actually began to happen in many parts of the world. Her vision was of a world without the sounds of birds, crickets and other animals.

Henry David Thoreau postulated in his classic work, "Walden Pond," that, in order for man to survive and be happy, he should go back to nature, to simple living.

The great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, pointed out the only value of civilization in his book, "Notes from Underground", the story of a man who chose to live in a small hole underground and refused to come out.

Asked why he chose to live underground rather than live among civilized men above, the man declared, "What has civilization achieved, except to increase the varieties of human sensations, and absolutely nothing else?"

It may be too late for modern man to renounce electricity, computers, television, and even the cell phone, but if we do not reflect seriously on the present world condition and the terrible situation we find ourselves in today, there may not be any civilization to speak of in the near future.

The choice is ours. Planet Earth can no longer take all the abuses mankind has heaped upon it for centuries. She seems to be saying, "Enough is enough! It is now time to teach mankind a lesson."

And so the structures and monuments that man has built are slowly being demolished or washed away by nature through volcanic eruptions, lightnings, typhoons, earthquakes and tidal waves, until man learns his lesson. History is repeating itself. Modern man, like Adam and Eve, is being expelled out of his paradise Earth because of misuse of Hidden Knowledge. He has eaten the Forbidden Fruit and is now reaping its consequences.

E-mail the author at jlicauco@geocities.com.

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Taon taon talaga, kasama yan sa handa. Ang Noche Buena'ng walang Magnolia® Queso de Bola?
Parang kainan na walang plato't kutsara.

You may be drinking excess calories

From page C1

tea is equivalent to 180 calories.

As you can see, knowing the basics about liquid calories can spell the difference between weight loss success and failure.

Ignorance is not the only reason liquid calories can sabotage your weight loss efforts. A study done at Purdue University found that people would usually eat less when they knew they had eaten too many calories but they wouldn't make any adjustments even if they had drunk the same amount of calories.

The study involved 15 healthy people who were divided into two groups. One group was told to eat 450 calories worth of jellybeans a day. The other group was instructed to drink the same amount of calories in the form of soft drinks (the equivalent of one liter of cola). After two weeks, the two groups switched.

Whenever each group ate the extra calories, they made adjustments in their diet so they did not gain any weight. But when they drank soda, they made no such adjustment and thus, gained weight. The researchers speculated that liquids did not make us feel full the same way that solid food does.

So if you are wondering why you are not losing weight despite watching your food intake carefully, the source of your frustration might be the "hidden" calories in your drinks.

Here are some guidelines about popular drinks to help you make the right fluid choices. To ensure we share the same perspective, four ounces are equal to the contents of a regular coffee cup, a drinking glass is equivalent to eight ounces and a tumbler has 16 ounces.

Iced tea

Iced tea made from scratch (tea bag, water, ice cubes) has zero calories. Add a teaspoon of sugar and you have a grand total of 15 calories. Commercial iced tea mix is a different story because of added sweeteners. Like I said earlier, an eight-ounce glass has 90 calories. Do you still remember "Butterfly Iced Tea," which used to be popular in the '70s? It was made from a highly sweetened concentrate. It was so sweet that I am sure it had more than just 90 calories a glass.

Many restaurants offer "bottomless" iced tea after you order your first glass, and the new foreign gym chains are offering free iced tea to their clients. Consumers think they are getting a good deal. They are from a financial point of view, and if the iced tea is "naked" or made from scratch. But if the tea is made from a sweetened commercial mix, then it is not such a great bargain because many people do not realize how many calories they are needlessly drinking.

Specialty coffee

There was a time when ordering a cappuccino or espresso was as sophisticated as you could get.

Not anymore. Since the advent of specialty coffee houses around the world, we have had fancy concoctions like a Starbucks Chocolate Brownie Frappuccino. Unfortunately, a 16-ounce cup of this concoction contains 490 calories. That's like eating two small slices of chocolate cake.

If you want to save your calories for "real" dessert, ask for nonfat milk instead of whole milk or cream and lay off the whipped cream and heavy chocolate or flavored syrups. A tall cappuccino, latte or mocha with non-fat milk will have 60, 110 and 140 calories respectively.

Smoothies

A smoothie is the modern version of an old-fashioned milkshake. Fruit-based smoothies are healthier because they contain antioxidants from the fruit, and protein and calcium from the yogurt or milk, while a milkshake has too much saturated fat because it is made with ice cream. But healthy or not, you can still end up drinking more calories than you would like.

The average fruit-based smoothie has about 180 calories. But once you start adding on high-calorie ingredients like honey, cream, peanut butter, chocolate, syrup, fruit nectar, whole milk, coconut cream and protein powders, the count can be anywhere from 400 to 950 calories. You may as well have eaten a Quarter Pounder with fries at your nearest McDonald's.

Pearl shakes

I have a friend who called her Arizona café, "The Boba Café." At first, I thought she was trying to be cute by using the feminine version of *bobo*, but then I found out that in some parts of the United States, pearl shakes were known as boba tea (would you believe it was because the tapioca balls reminded some smart aleck of a woman's boobs?). Here in the Philippines, Zagu will probably end up the generic name since it is the first brand. A 12-ounce cup of Zagu Café Latte has 280 calories, while the same size cup of Zagu Mango has 220 calories.

Sports drinks

Sports drinks are useful if you exercise for more than 90 minutes, especially if you are doing it outdoors in hot and humid conditions. I use sports drinks when I have to do a series of aerobic presentations in sweltering heat or I have to do several hours of instructor training. They are a conveniently bottled source of fluid, electrolytes and carbohydrates. However, if you are only exercising moderately and you are trying to lose weight, you are better off drinking water, since a sports drink like Gatorade has 96 calories. By the way, if you look at the label, you might think Gatorade only has 24 calories. Read the label a bit more carefully and you will realize that the label actually says 24 calories per 100 ml (each bottle contains 400 ml).

Fruit juices

Real 100-percent fruit juice has an edge over a cola drink because it contains natural vitamins and minerals. However, in terms of calories, there isn't much difference. A 12-ounce cola contains 160 calories while the same amount of orange juice has 180 calories.

When it comes to weight loss, it's always better to eat the whole fruit rather than drink the juice. A medium sized orange has 50 calories while an eight-ounce glass of OJ has double that amount. The fiber in the orange will keep you feeling full while the orange juice won't.

While we are on the topic of fruit juice, a consumer with nutrition savvy knows that "fruit drink" means the product is mostly water, flavoring and sugar with just a little real fruit juice. So while a fruit drink and fruit juice may have similar amounts of calories, you get more nutrition for your calories with real fruit juice.

If you are trying to lose weight, watch out for the bottomless lemonades that are offered to you. A 16-ounce tumbler of a commercial lemonade mix can easily contain 200 calories.

Diet soft drinks

Most soft drinks (whether colas or un-colas) contain approximately 150 calories for every 12 ounces. Diet or light soft drinks contain zero calories because of the artificial sweeteners used. So they can be a good substitute if you get a craving for a soft drink. Just be aware that research suggests that some people tend to eat more when they have a diet soft drink. This could be because they subconsciously believe they can eat more since they are already saving calories, or because the body reacts to the artificial sweetener like it was real sugar so it feels hungrier.

Alcoholic drinks

Alcoholic drinks are a triple whammy when you are trying to lose weight. Aside from the calories they contain, the alcohol makes you lose your inhibitions. You usually eat more than you realize and, of course, it's hard for a lot of people to have only one drink. Hard drinks like gin, whisky, rum, brandy, tequila and vodka contain about 115 to 125 calories per jigger, while mixed drinks have between 150 to 250 calories depending on the mixers used. Wine, whether white or red, contains between 85 to 100 calories per four-ounce glass. A 12-ounce bottle of beer has about 150 calories.

Water

Plain old water contains zero calories. Some people think that drinking hot water or "silver tea" after a meal can somehow melt the fat they've just eaten. No such luck but drinking hot water instead of having dessert can definitely help you lose weight.

Having your latte and eating it, too

A cookie has 50 calories. A small brownie has 100 calories. A slice of cake has 250 calories. Now visualize: Iced tea is the same as four cookies. A smoothie is two brownies. A frapuccino is a slice of cake.

If you don't want to drown in excess liquid calories, think of a drink as dessert or a snack. Something to have occasionally, not every day.

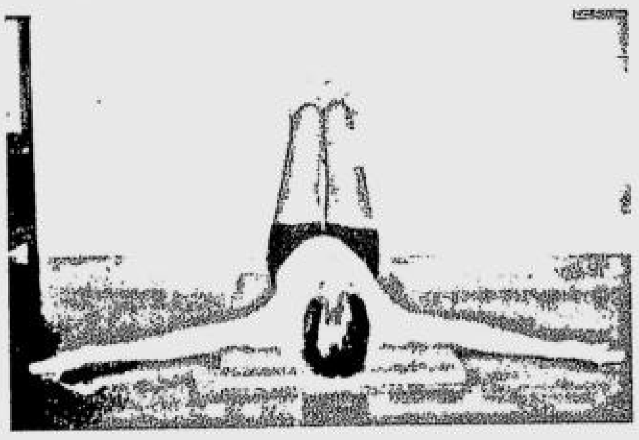
Now, if you are trying to gain weight, liquid calories are just what you need to pack in some pounds. Smoothies, fruit juices, and iced tea are healthy ways to drink your calories without doing much damage to your appetite, so you still have room in your stomach for real food.

Watch "In Fitness and In Health" on Studio 23 Mondays to Fridays from 6 to 6:30 a.m.

E-mail the author at fitness@ibm.net

For questions and past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Suspended bent pendulum

STRENGTHENS the abdominal muscles that cause rotation.

Equipment
Exercise mat

Exercise technique

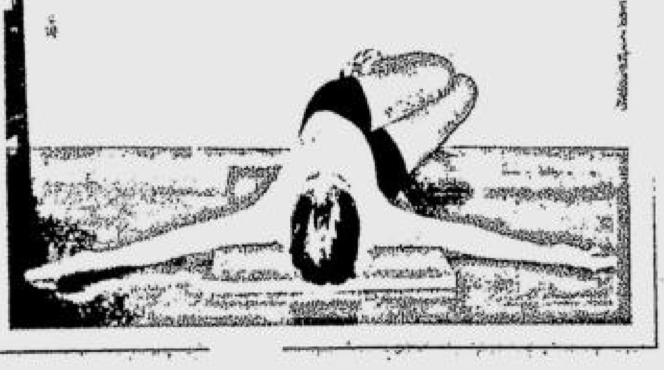
1. Lie down with your knees bent over your hips and your arms straight at shoulder level.
2. Slowly take your knees to the right side and suspend them halfway to the floor.
3. Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
4. Return to center.
5. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips

1. This is an advanced exercise. It is not appropriate for you if you are new to abdominal exercises or if you have a history of lower back problems.
2. Keep breathing as you hold the position.
3. Try to keep your shoulders facing the ceiling and avoid turning them towards your knees.

Repetitions

One repetiti on means doing the exercise on the right and the left side. Do one to two repetitions only.



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Oct. 29, 2002
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Bromhexine
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Per DOH-BFAD No. 0058-S2002

BEST COUGH MEDICINE AWARD 2002

LIFESTYLE

Empowerment without limits

"AUTHENTIC power is the human experience without the limitations of fear, self-doubt and self hatred."—Gary Zukav, "The Heart of the Soul"

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Every time you feel right, defensive, angry; blame others, yourself or the universe; are self critical, upset, judgmental of others; and have a painful reaction to someone or something, then you have encountered unhealthy parts of yourself that want to change others instead of yourself. But you should be congratulated when you notice these "parts of yourself." You are on your way towards self-awareness.

Earth school

Let's do a visualization exercise. Close your eyes and imagine that you are in a huge classroom. For walls, you have the forests and mountains, the sky is your roof, the grass and flowers your floor. This is your new classroom, and it is in a school called Earth.

Old vs new

In this school, you are only qualified to graduate if you evolve into a new species. The new species leaves behind the old species.

The old species explores the physical/outer world; the new explores the spiritual/inner world.

The old species creates security by manipulating and controlling people and situations; the new creates security by building self-confidence through understanding and healing the self.

In the Earth school, we are all students—fellow souls confronted by circumstances that are challenging and difficult for all of us. And we are all trying to learn through our own individual, intimate and personal experiences.

All emotions are physical

Biochemical reactions occur in our body when we experience an emotion. This only proves one thing—that what you feel becomes a physical sensation, the body and mind are one. So if you watch what and how you feel, then you can control the effects on your body and, ultimately, your health. And if you understand why you feel the way you do, then you can heal your emotional self.

EMPOWERMENT/ D3

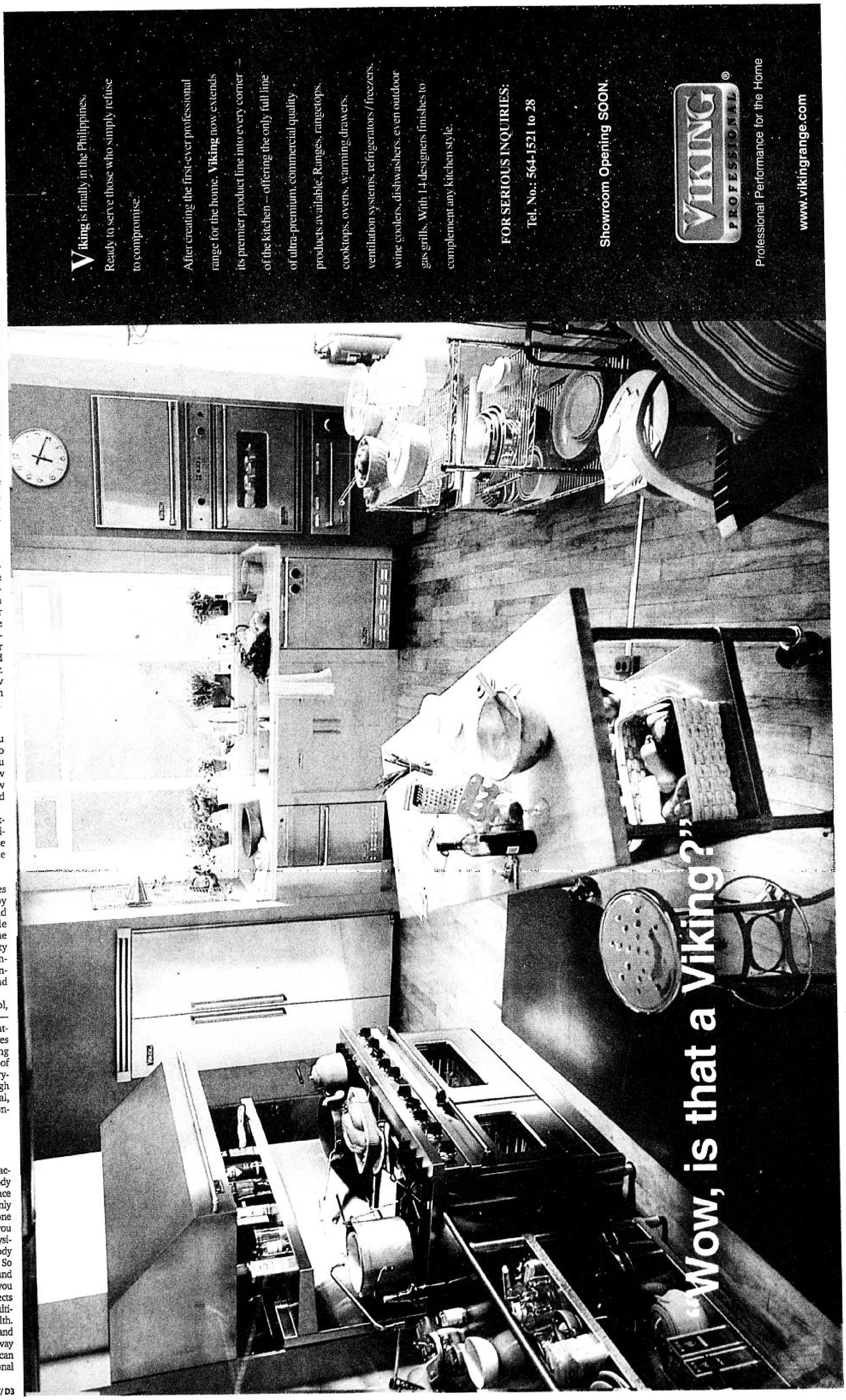
EXPRESS ADVICE

STOP

Always keep your ATM PIN
(Personal Identification Number)
and ATM transactions private.
Be sure to change your PIN when
you sense it has been compromised.

BPI EXPRESS TELLER
The fully-loaded ATM card.

express teller



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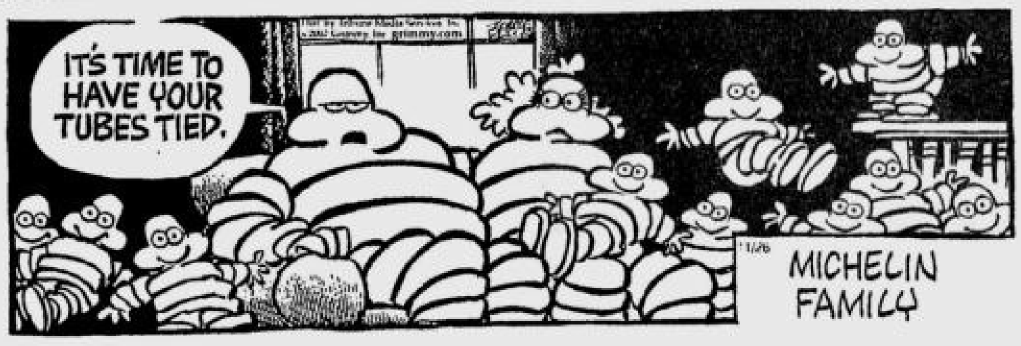
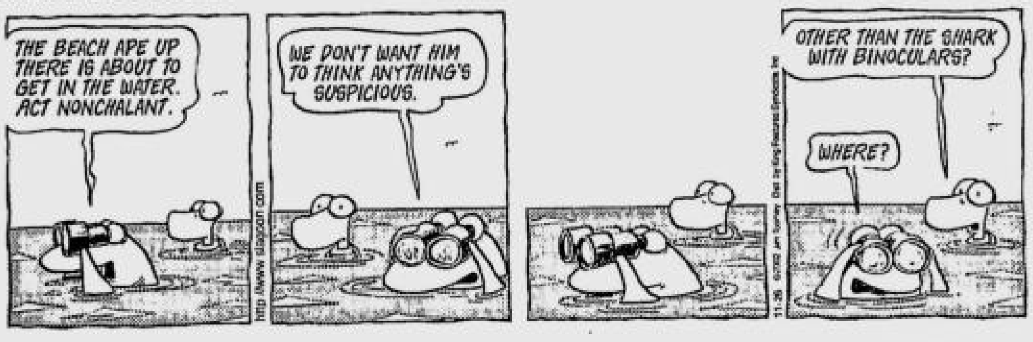
MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


IT'S TIME TO HAVE YOUR TUBES TIED.
MICHELIN FAMILY

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

KAILANGAN TULUNGAN KO ANG MERALCO
BAKIT SILA? E... KAMING MAHIHIRAP ANG DAPAT NA TULUNGAN
YUN ANG TUTULONG SA ELECTION, E!

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


THE BEACH APE UP THERE IS ABOUT TO GET IN THE WATER. ACT NONCHALANT.
WE DON'T WANT HIM TO THINK ANYTHING'S SUSPICIOUS.
OTHER THAN THE SHARK WITH BINOCULARS?
WHERE?

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

ANO ITONG NABALITAAN KONG NAG-A-AFTER SIX KA RAW?
NAGDI-DIYETA KA?
TOMAS, PANG-ANIM NA'YAN! UWI NA!
KINABUKASAN...
TATLO PA LAANG...
AKO RE-EN...

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

MY DAD WILL BE HERE TOMORROW, THEN HE AND MOM WILL GO HOME ON FRIDAY.
MMMF.
IT'S BEEN SO NICE HAVING HELP WITH THE BABY. I'M REALLY GOING TO MISS HER.
HI KIDS! I DON'T WANT TO BE A BOTHER, BUT WOULD ONE OF YOU MIND SHOWING ME HOW TO USE THE TV REMOTE AGAIN?
YEAH, IT'S GOING TO BE LONELY HERE IN THE BATHROOM WHEN SHE'S GONE.
MOM! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!!

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

HEY, EARL, WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?
MY OZZIE!
ANYTHING ELSE?
WHAT ELSE IS THERE?
11-26

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

SO MUCH FOR A TRANQUIL HIATUS! I MUST CALL ATOMO AND TELL HER THAT I DON'T NEED RESCUING!
Peet Peet
WE'RE REALLY LOST ATOMO! IN MIDAIR AT THAT! WHAT NOW?
OH LOOKY! MY PHONE'S RINGING AND IT'S FROM WEBOY!
RINGGG! RINGGG!
COME ON. COME ON. PICK UP THE PHONE!
AREN'T YOU ANSWERING THE CALL?
ARE YOU KIDDING?!! HE MIGHT BE CALLING COLLECT!

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

NOBODY TALKS TO MY GOD LIKE THAT!
OUCH!
THE FAITH DEFENDER GOES OFFENSIVE!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tina Turner, George Segal, Robert Goulet, Charles Schulz

Happy Birthday: Hard work, dedication and determination will be required if you are going to reach your set goals this year. This year can be your turning point if you ready yourself for the events that are about to unfold. You will have the ability to pull things together to do whatever is asked of you. Your numbers are 10, 13, 22, 31, 37, 40

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Take trips that will provide you with adventure and cultural knowledge. Social gatherings will open doors to love connections. This is a day to make a positive move.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your refusal to listen to the advice given by friends or relatives could be your downfall. Try to see your situation in terms of possibilities rather than limitations. Remain open.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Friends may be unhappy if you allow a new love to monopolize your time. Try to maintain balance in your life. Don't be too eager to get involved in joint financial ventures.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Heated arguments with loved ones may lead to changes in your home. Drastic reactions toward others will be detrimental. Keep your feelings to yourself. Be careful whom you lend money to.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your dramatic approach to emotional matters may alienate you from the ones you love. Adopt a more practical outlook with less melodrama. Be clear about your role in the situation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Problems will surface if you have to deal with institutions. Put off meetings with superiors until a more suitable time. Focus on detail and satisfying yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can make major improvements if you set your mind to it. Someone you live with appears to be confused. Your ability to see situations from all sides and your need for balance and fairness should help.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your mental agility will be at an all-time high. Your ability to communicate with others and articulate your ideas will be noticed. Pursue your professional goals.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your need for excitement and adventure will be satisfied if you travel or get involved in philosophic groups. New places and new ideas will be very stimulating for you and will inspire a change in your professional direction.

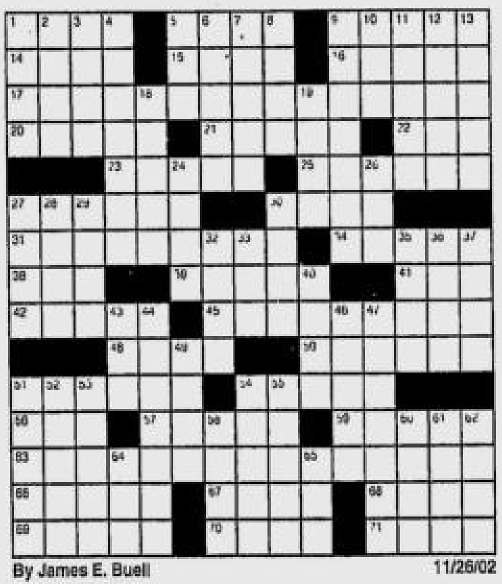
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may be subject to dealing with the affairs of elders in your family. If you haven't left yourself enough time, your partner may be disgruntled by the whole affair. Somehow you must find balance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Tension will cause confrontations with your mate. Discuss the root of this with your partner. Secret activities could damage your reputation. Be forewarned.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): One-sided romantic connections will only lead you astray. Keep your thoughts to yourself. This is not the time to rock the boat. Respect the politics that surround you at your place of work.

Birthday Baby: You will always be trying to accomplish and never daunted by failure. You will pick yourself up and start again without thinking twice or looking back. You will strive for perfection and you will make your mark.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL

11/26/02

ACROSS
1 Stead
5 Alan of "Shane"
9 Pseudonym
14 Plays parts
15 Mutt of Garfield's jokes
16 Actress Fiorentino
17 Hook
20 Like old jokes
21 Rock full of crystals
22 Affirmative action?
23 Waned
25 Way out
27 Funny Sid
30 Bern's river
31 With 45A, line
34 Makes eyes at
38 Hairpiece
39 Pooh's creator
41 Bauxite or galena
42 Emulate Ricky Henderson
45 See 31A
48 Movie piglet
50 July birthstones
51 Patisserie
54 Actor Glenn
56 "Much __ About Nothing"
57 Hot drink
59 Serious situation
63 Sinker
66 Calvin of fashion
67 Molten flow
68 Zip about
69 "End of the Road" star Keach
70 Fingerboard increment
71 Fencer's sword

DOWN
1 Track circuits
2 "New Jack City" co-star
3 Sundance's girlfriend
4 Serving no purpose
5 Cut off
6 Saying
7 Did lunch
8 "Whip It" rock group
9 Not quite presto, musically
10 "__ Abner"
11 Cockamamie
12 So long, senor
13 "__ of Iwo Jima"
18 Get back in the sack?
19 Inkling
24 Fedora feature
26 Sid.
27 Intimidates
28 Mine access
29 Outskirts
30 Dancer Pavlova
32 Intuitive feeling
33 Bridge authority Culbertson
35 Mischievous Norse god
36 A Great Lake
37 Espies
40 Saragossa's river
43 Tad's dad
44 Theft
46 Surpass
47 Butt in
49 Invitation letters
51 Gets behind
52 Over 18
53 Politically divided peninsula
54 Type of battery
55 Soprano Emma
58 Meadow youngster
60 PDQ relative
61 Bog down
62 Chip in a chip
64 Singer Damone
65 Hep dude

Monday's Puzzle Solved

M	O	W	■	I	N	S	E	A	M	■	S	H	A	W
E	R	A	■	P	A	N	A	M	A	■	T	I	L	E
E	N	T	■	S	O	U	R	O	N	■	A	M	I	D
K	E	E	P	E	M	F	L	Y	I	N	G	■	■	■
E	T	R	E	■	I	F	S	■	T	O	S	S	E	D
S	T	E	E	P	S	■	■	J	O	T	■	U	K	E
T	E	R	R	A	■	S	T	A	B	■	M	E	E	T
■	■	■	I	N	T	H	E	N	A	V	Y	■	■	■
I	V	A	N	■	E	O	N	S	■	M	O	R	E	S
C	A	L	■	L	S	T	■	■	W	I	P	E	U	P
E	L	L	I	O	T	■	A	I	R	■	I	N	G	A
■	■	■	B	U	C	K	P	R	I	V	A	T	E	S
I	B	I	S	■	A	E	R	A	T	E	■	A	N	T
D	U	K	E	■	S	E	I	N	E	S	■	L	I	I
A	D	E	N	■	E	N	L	I	S	T	■	S	E	C

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11/26/02

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

BEN, YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO FACE REALITY!
IN A FEW DAYS, THESE OLD WOODS WILL BE CUT DOWN...
...MAKING ROOM FOR A CONDO DEVELOPMENT. HOUSING MORE THAN FORTY FAMILIES!
SPEAKING OF HOUSING...
...WHERE ARE THESE GUYS GONNA LIVE?
END
HOW'D HE DO THAT? AND RIGHT ON CUE...

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

MIKO, MA-GUILTY KA NGA! SABIHIN MO NA KAY GLENN ANG TOTOO!!
'DI NA NOH!!
PARA NAMANG MASISIRAAN NG BAIT YON DAHIL LANG HINDI NAG DEAN'S LIST..
TAGAK!
MEANWHILE, SA LIBRARY...
HMM.. 8PM PALA UMAALIS ANG GUARD DITO HA..
BWAHAHAHAH!!
..BUKAS NG GABI KO GAGAWIN ANG AKING MAITIM NA BALAK!!!

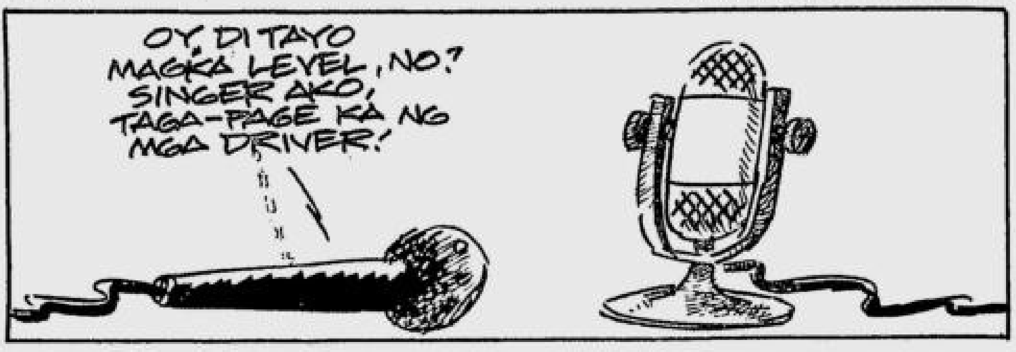
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

HWOOH! NAKAKA-ONSE NA 'KONG BOTTOMLESS ICED TEA! KAYO?
7½
SIGE! PA-REFILL LANG NANG PA-REFILL PARA HINDI NAKAKAHIYA TUMAMBAY DITO!
ERRG!
TSONG, ORDER MAN LANG TAYO NG TINAPAY....
MAHAL YUN DITO, PARE! 'DI KA PA BA NABUBUSOG TOPITS?!?
NALALASING NA NGA 'KO, EH...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

JAJA!!! BAGO ANG HAIRDO MO!!!
BAGAY BA SCARLET?? NAGPA-HAIR RE-BONDING AKO!!
AKO NAMAN NAGPA-HAIR REBORN...PARANG HOT OIL BA!!
TALAGA?! SI MELANIE KAYA?!
MUKHANG NAGPA-HAIR RESURRECT!!
NAKAKALOKA PAG SALE!

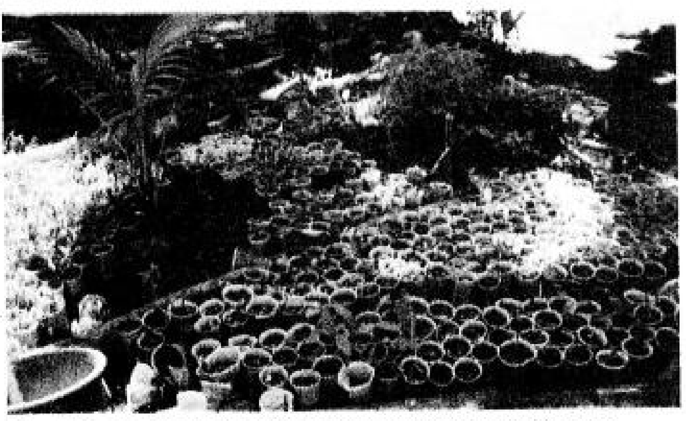
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


OY, DI TAYO MAGKA LEVEL, NO? SINGER AKO, TAGA-PAGE KA NG MGA DRIVER!

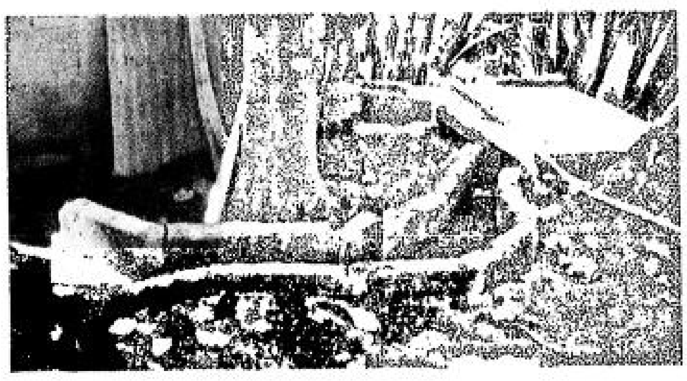
Old coconut trunks are chopped into pieces and used as firewood.

Mayor Macas was warned that letting households bear most of the burden of managing the garbage was political suicide

Waste segregation is practiced especially in Tinago Falls, one of Linamon's major tourist attractions.



Vegetable seedlings are available free of charge at the Linamon composting/demo farm.



A concrete gutter connects the pig sty directly to a covered pit to make cleaning of hog waste easier.

Lessons from Linamon

From page D4

Through continuing public education and information campaigns, several ordinances and resolutions, and political will, he is instilling in the minds of the people of Linamon that environmental protection and conservation are not things one defers for whatever reason. The mayor says he was warned that letting households bear most of the burden of managing garbage was political suicide, but Macas says that after eight months, people seem to have started to appreciate the wisdom of the campaign.

Resource, not waste

Macas and the municipal council have instituted measures to provide for more effective management of waste, discourage illegal fishing and protect Linamon's waters and coasts and their resources. Through Balak (Basura Atras, Linamon Abante sa Kalamboan or, roughly, Garbage Retreat, Linamon Advance for Progress), the town has adopted a solid waste management program that includes sorting, segregation, composting, recycling and reuse.

Discarded coconut branches get a new lease on life as roadside planters.

"Trash is a resource, not waste," according to the former municipal planning and development coordinator, one of the few Filipinos who do not go by Filipino time (he strictly follows his daily schedule, begins meetings on time, and does not wait for people who are late for an appointment). The mayor says he does not believe in dumpsites and has been quoted as saying, "Only dumb mayors need dumpsites." Nor does he think a high-tech solution like an incinerator will make the garbage problem disappear.

Macas, who has set up a municipal composting site where people can bring their biodegradable trash, says each household should take responsibility for its own garbage. The town's single garbage truck goes around once or twice a week but only to collect non-biodegradable waste, which is sold to those who have use for them. At the municipal composting site, Linamon residents, who are either farmers or fishermen, can get compost and even attend sessions conducted by municipal agriculturists on vegetable production.

But individual households have also set up their own composting systems.

Making Linamon's environment program even more interesting is the way offenders are handled. Although ordinances provide for the payment of fines, Macas says if people do not have money, they are asked instead to work for a day in municipal projects, primarily those related to environmental protection.

Managing the garbage problem, Macas says, is a matter of political will. But values education and continuing education/information programs also help.

Empowerment without limits

From page D1

According to Zukav, "Each emotion is a message for you, a signal from your soul." You miss the point when you consider an emotion as unpleasant. The point is you need to know something about yourself when you experience an emotion. And emotions—anger, bitterness, sadness, hatred, jealousy—will continue to manifest until you get the message. And the more important the message, the more forcefully it will recur in your life. Your most painful emotions will tell you what are most resistant to change in your life and in yourself—a truth you refuse to face.

Choosing your class

You are always enrolled in this special school, but you have to choose your class. There are only two—fear and love. If you choose fear, you will master the art of anger, vengefulness, despair and greed. But if you choose the love class, then you will master joy and gratitude, peace and healing. Your task as a student is not to change your husband, wife, parents, friends, bosses, employees or classmates. It is to change yourself.

Lessons from the class of love

1. Being emotionally aware; noticing what sensations you feel each time you experience an emotion.
2. Recognizing where and how energy leaves your system, the foundation of spiritual growth. Learn to process your feelings.
3. Remembering a time of joy in your life. Open your heart.
4. Making each decision an opportunity for creativity. You can re-do and re-make yourself. You can change your life. It is never too late.
5. Mastering the way emotional energy leaves you body. The way energy leaves your creative center transforms every experience.

When it leaves in fear and doubt, you create ways of exploiting circumstances and others; you are a predator and you produce illness.

When it leaves in love and trust, it transforms your experiences into co-creative celebrations of life; you are a creator and produce wellness.

Authentic power

Since the origin of the species, primitive man had to conquer the external world to survive. He had to hunt, kill and fight to live. Modern civilization and its stresses now pose a new challenge: to conquer the internal landscape—the self.

Creating authentic power is dramatically different from the pursuit of external power. It attempts to align the personality with the soul through emotional consciousness.

Love splash

Ingredients: a bowl of cool, clean water, a drop of rose aromatherapy oil or 10 clean rose petals, a pinch of salt.

Use this as your facial or body splash before starting your day or whenever you feel hot and bothered about anything. Look at yourself in the mirror and affirm, "The energy that flows through me is wholesome and happy."

If you want to scrub all those dry and dead cells from your body along with the toxins of negative emotions, try this:

Ingredients: 1 c of sea salt, 1 c of aloe vera gel (when using fresh stems, peel then blend the gel), 5 tbsp olive oil/virgin coco oil, 2 tbsp of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), 2 tsp of lemon or *dayap, calamansi* juice.

Mix the ingredients and rub the concoction throughout your body from feet to neck. Shower and rinse.

It is said that the longest distance anyone can ever travel is from the head to the heart. You reach for the most noble, fulfilling, joyful and empowering part of yourself—your soul.

Love and light!

Master Choa Kok Sui—"Meditations for Soul Realization and Meditation on the Lord's Prayer." Know yourself through meditation and experience inner peace and bliss, Dec. 7-8, ISO Complex, Ateneo de Manila University, Gate 3, Loyola Heights, QC. Call 635-9732/9733/9734, 687-2833.

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(Perfect for those planning a break.)

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Trek across sprawling grounds with good shoes and admission vouchers to the Singapore Zoo and Jurong BirdPark.

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Approach The Merlion from the air (use your Singapore Cable Car vouchers) or from the sea (use your bumboat vouchers from Singapore River Cruises & Leisure and Singapore Explorer).

The Singapore Visitor Kit
P6,800 worth of dining, shopping and sightseeing vouchers for each visitor. Singapore Visitor Kit offer valid for bookings and travel from now to 15 Dec 2002, while stocks last†.

Don't Miss!
- *Chinatown Heritage Centre*
- *Images of Singapore and The Merlion on Sentosa*
- *Singapore Discovery Centre*
- *Tea at Raffles Hotel*
- *Gloria Jean's Tea-&-Tour at CHIJMES*
- *Shopping at Funan The IT Mall (Shopping vouchers for the first 100 early birds only)*

† Terms and conditions apply.

In Singapore, the weeks between 2 November 2002 and 15 February 2003 are the year's most colourful. It's a huge experience of events, lights, tastes and irresistible shopping. And the best part is, every visitor gets ₱6,800 (SGD240) worth of dining, shopping and sightseeing vouchers for the trip! Ask your travel agent for details.

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* The Penny Black, Harry's Bar, Curry House, Lago Seafood Restaurant, Harvest Seafood Restaurant, BQ Bar, Maharajah Boat Quay, Asian Wok Restaurant and Molly Malone's.
For more information, please call Singapore Tourism Board, c/o Nancy Harel & Associates, Inc. Tel: 02-636-0258. Fax: 02-636-0259. Email: stbphils@pacific.net.ph

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

I came across another HMO provider who offers Annual Benefit Limit instead of my MEDICard's Dreaded Disease Limit. What is the difference between these two?

The Annual Benefit Limit, more commonly referred to as ABL refers to the maximum aggregate limit for availment of applicable benefits and services (i.e. in-patient and all diagnostic procedures both out-patient and in-patient) of a covered illness on a per member per year basis. These limits are cumulative of **ALL AVAILMENTS** made for whatever covered illness. In contrast to this, is the Dreaded Disease Limit (DDL), which is a MEDICard standard. DDL is a limit for dreaded illnesses such as stroke,cancer, accidents, etc., but unlike ABL is on a **PER ILLNESS PER MEMBER PER YEAR BASIS.**

MEDICard Advisory

Effective November 16, you may now reach MEDICard at its NEW TRUNK LINE NUMBER:

867-2020

HMO Events

AHMOPI ANNUAL CONVENTION: MEDICard PHILIPPINES sends the biggest delegation to the Association of HMOs of the Philippines, Inc. (AHMOPI) 12th Annual Convention held at the New World Renaissance Hotel last November 15. Guided by the theme "A Healthy Nation: A Strong Republic", the 16-member association convened on issues on the industry and means to make their programs available to more Filipinos. Present were (1st row L-R) Miriam Villafuerte, Luzzi Cui, Marlyn Delgado, Susan Zulueta, Lulu Dadia, Maricel Torres, Jonn Sabater, Pia Reyes, Luis Montoya (EVP & GM) and Robert John Chainani; (2nd row L-R) Ursus De Quiros, Voltaire Victoria, Thirdy Lopez, Enrico Bunyog, Dr. Nicky Montoya (Medical Director), Junn Miergas and Dr. Dennis Villarin.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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Lessons from Linamon

Mayor Cherlito Macas shows visitors freshly harvested 'kalabasa' from the composting/demonstration farm of Linamon.

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

IF FIRST impressions truly last, then Lanao del Norte has got it made. For the gateway to the northern part of the land of the Maranaos for those entering through Cagayan de Oro or Iligan City is Linamon, a town with only about 16,000 in population, but is setting standards for others to follow, not just in the province but in all of Mindanao and, possibly, even the Philippines.

Under the leadership of Mayor Cherlito Macas, Linamon is one of this year's recipients of the Gawad Galing Pook Trailblazing Programs primarily for its model waste management program. (The town's name is both a contraction of the names of the two ill-fated lovers in local lore—Lina and Ramon—as well as a reference to their tragic fate—they were supposedly swallowed up by a river.)

Macas, a first-term mayor whose desktop bears a name plate saying Public Servant, is not putting off what needs to be done simply because his town's population is still too small to really wreak havoc on the environment.

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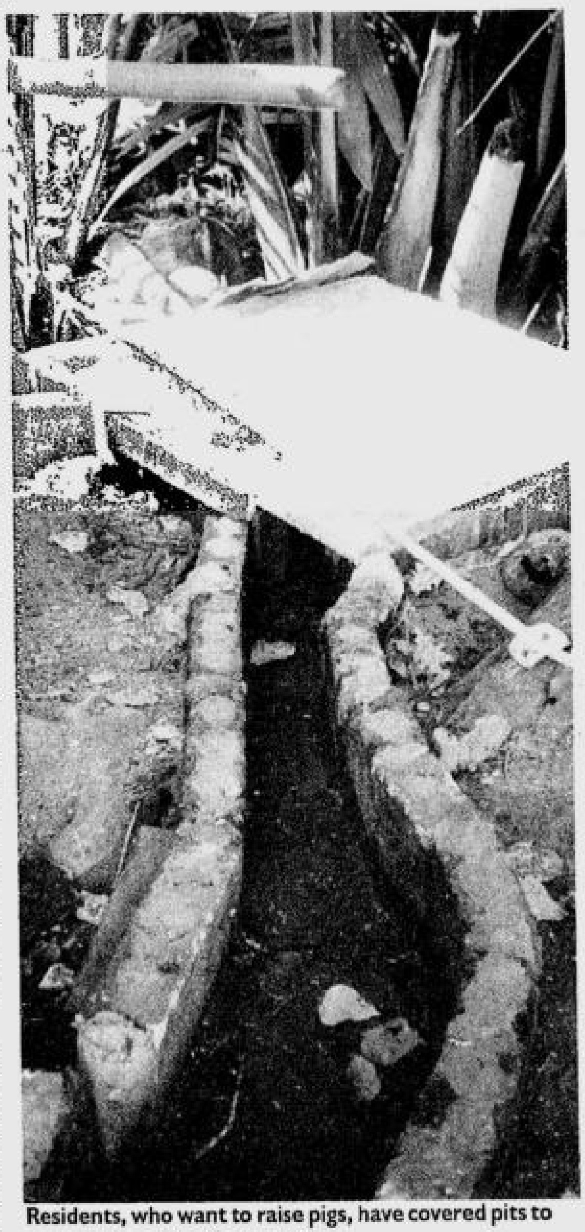
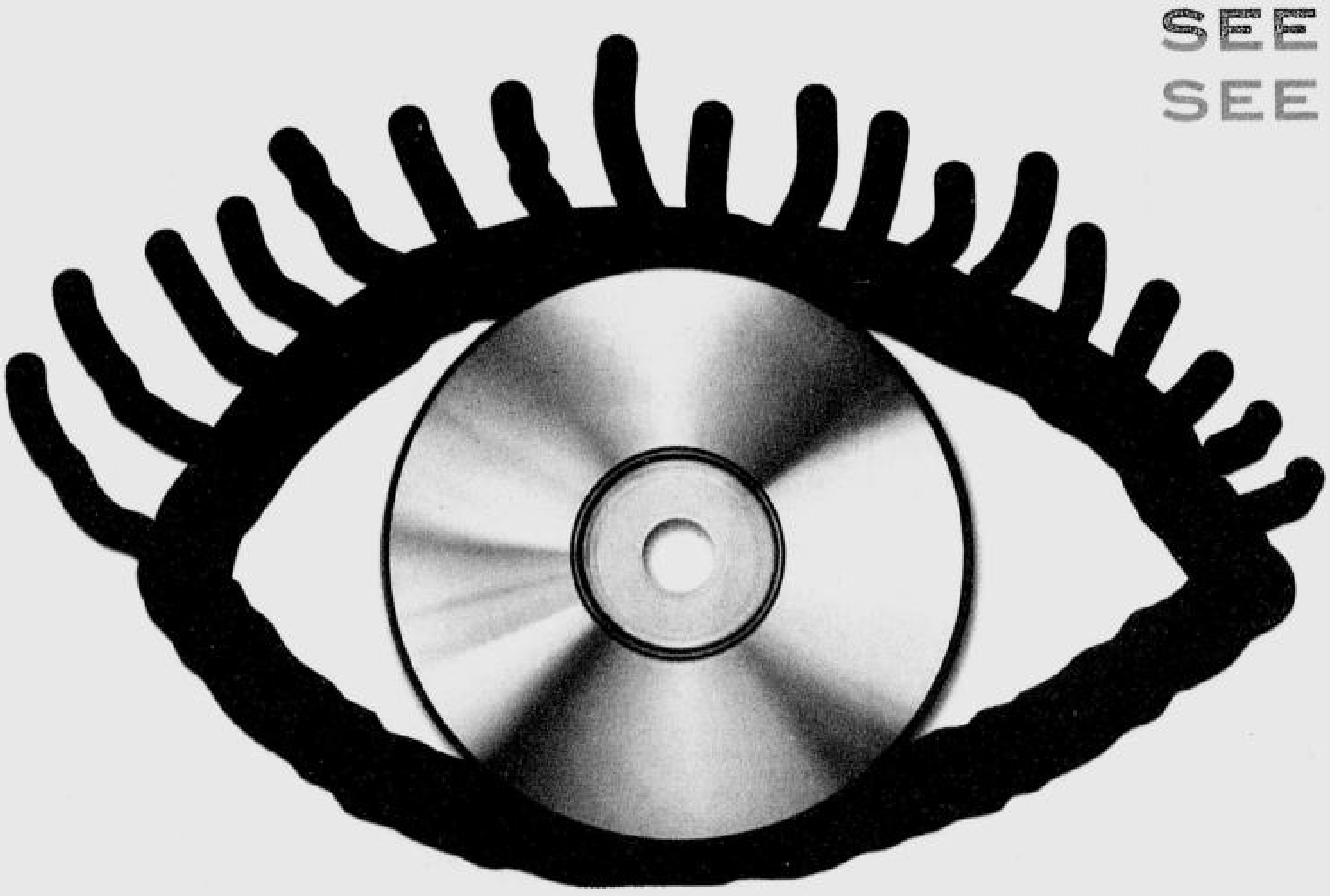


Residents, who want to raise pigs, have covered pits to contain the odor of hog waste.



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